

BROKEN BONDS.

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BROKEN BONDS.

A PRIZE TEMPERANCE STORY.

BY

FELIX MAX.

"Even the Gods themselves cannot annihilate the action
that is done."—*Pindar*.

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ДРОКЕВ ПАУЗЫ

СЮРПРИЗЫ РАДИОЧАСТИ

25

ХАМ-ХИЛДЫ

ПОДБОРКА СЮРПРИЗОВ ИЗ РАДИОЧАСТИ «ДРОКЕВ ПАУЗЫ»
СОСТАВЛЕНА В АВТОРСКОМ РЕДАКТОРСКОМ КОЛЛЕГИУМЕ

Составитель
СЕРГЕЙ АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ БОГДАНОВ
Москва

BROKEN BONDS.

CHAPTER I.

"For there are sorrows where of necessity the soul must be its own support."—*Schiller's Wallenstein.*

Just within the threshold of a wide French window, a young girl was standing. Over the not-far distant lawn were scattered many groups of brilliantly dressed people. She was not looking at them, however, but at the clouds beyond, which shifting and changing every moment, were drifting over the sky as over a shoreless sea. Yet her mind did not seem to be grasping their beauty, for there was a look of perplexity and trouble in her eyes, very different indeed from that earnest, voluntary glance which denotes conscious admiration.

A gentleman sitting where he could see her face did not long allow her reverie to be uninterrupted: "What made you get up from that

comfortable seat, Miss Eleanor? You really think we should not stay here any longer? Now I do not believe there is any place in the world you would like better. Confess that I am right."

"It is fortunate for you that Flo is not here to scold you for that egotistic speech, Mr. Stuart. Indeed there are many places I prefer to this, one of which is the croquet ground. You know Flo has arranged a game for us and people are probably gossiping about our being away so long" A faint flush crossed the speaker's face, and a half-mischievous smile for a moment drove away the troubled, perplexed look there.

"And so in obedience to social tyranny we must go. But can't you relieve my suspense and give me your answer now? Say just one word."

"I cannot Mr. Stuart. I have asked you to wait till to-morrow.... You don't want me, in the first moment of bewilderment, to decide thoughtlessly, perhaps make a great mistake?"

His cheek flushed: "Your idea of the motive for my haste should be different from that. I have given you my heart without reserve, and"—

Eleanor turned with a quick, impulsive movement, and put her hand on his arm. He grasped it eagerly. "I have faith in you to believe that, and I want to be just as faithful. But there is something else I want to speak about for one moment before we go; and we must go very soon, for see! there is Flo starting towards the

house. I know she is in search of us....Mr. Stuart will you at the party to-night for my sake do all you can to keep Edward from taking wine? Many times I've wanted to ask this of you, but for some reason I never have. This is my first request. I have always thought that you could influence him if you only would."

She stopped short when she saw Mr. Stuart's face. He was looking up at her with a smile in his eyes and thinking : " What a dear little puritan she is, so earnest over her pet theories." Aloud he said : " Eleanor, it won't hurt him. Do let the poor fellow have a little peace. If you are all the time lecturing him, he'll get worse. Wild oats must be sown. This is but one of the inevitable conditions of our existence here."

" You do not know what he is already. The harvest will come only too soon."

She turned back to the window again to hide the mist in her eyes.

If her companion could have realized that she was speaking of a great shadow in her life, getting every day heavier and more dark ; that she was influenced by no ideal prejudice, as he supposed, he might have shown more earnest sympathy. As it was he only said coldly : " If you wish it I can tell him not to touch anything to-night, though I think it would be useless unless I abstained myself, and that would be all nonsense. I am not such a fool (I beg your pardon, Eleanor) as to have a mere glass of port or sherry affect

me unfavourably to my position as a gentleman, but if it does your brother he had certainly better let the thing alone. You would however, more quickly accomplish your praiseworthy object by asking Mrs. Harland to banish wine from the supper table. That is the root of the evil of social drinking. Mr. Dale, her prospective son-in-law might go home, under such fortunate circumstances, a little less under the weather."

Eleanor was surprised at Mr. Stuart's sarcastic tone, but was prevented from replying by a person coming up behind them and a merry voice saying abruptly : "Oh, you naughty children ! What have you been doing here so long ? We have got so tired waiting. Russell, please go and tell Mr. Dale that Miss Osborne and I will join you immediately for our game—the rest of the company are all nicely settled. We have twenty sets.... Now, Eleanor ! what is the matter ? You have been gazing at those clouds so long that you stand and look at me as if you didn't hear a word I said. I trust the clouds feel no less slighted than I. Wake up and tell me where your thoughts are. I don't believe you're enjoying yourself. I left you too long to the tender graces of that heartless cousin of mine."

Eleanor laughed : " You musn't judge of enjoyment by words," she said. " You haven't given me a chance to speak since I came. Your words come like avalanches crushing my words to pieces. There ! wait one moment for me to

say this. I have decided to be at the party to-night. But I want to go home first, so as to come with Edward."

"Oh! Nell, I knew you would take pity on us forlorn mortals. I am so glad, and you shall as a reward have the carriage after we finish that important game. The result will be metaphorical, remember. But tell me what did Russell say to you? Were you thinking of him when I came in? Your face was long enough to reach"—

"Oh you inevitable exaggerator! I acknowledge, however, that my face might be shortened with advantage. What shall I do?"

"Select sprightly subjects for thoughts."

"It is a metaphysical axiom that people cannot always select their own thoughts. They come into the mind unbidden, and are often most unwelcome."

Flo's quick eye saw the shadowy change on her friend's face and she said in a far different tone: "Something troubles you, I know, and I shall want to be told about it sometime. I hope that cousin of mine hasn't annoyed you by some of his perverse notions about things. By the way I told him we would be there right off,—see he is waving his handkerchief now, as if in impatience. Oh Nell! he can't bear to be away more than five minutes from your side."

The color on Eleanor's cheeks deepened at this appendix to Flo's speech, but she answered nothing to the half-sincere, half lightsome raillery.

At least one person out of the four did not enjoy the game which followed. Usually self-forgetful and appreciative of efforts made for her amusement, it was a new phenomenon for Eleanor to be so silent, evidently occupied with her own thoughts to the exclusion of other interests. In fact there was this afternoon a weight on her heart which her utmost strength of will could not shake off.

By means of that subtle magnetism which envelopes some people like an atmosphere, Mr. Stuart's mind caught the hue of hers, and while wondering what was troubling her, he found it impossible to play with his accustomed skill. His opponents were unusually vindictive. Flo seeming to have an especial aversion to his unfortunate ball, while she overwhelmed him with volleys of verbal artillery, which were no less trying to his gentlemanly nerves.

It was not strange that he loved Eleanor Osborne. She was not handsome certainly. Her features were neither clear cut nor regular; and yet fine thoughts and feelings had left an expression on her face which could not fail to charm:

“A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet.”

It was impossible to find out her fine nature all at once, and Mr. Stuart had not the keenness of perception to see much further than the sur-

face. He had caught few glimpses of the inner sanctuary. But that he loved as he did was an evidence of accurate judgment, and not wholly inadequate spiritual insight.

It was not unpleasant to see her hesitate about accepting his offered love. Perhaps there could have been found satisfactory reasons for his vanity, perhaps not. Anyway he did not doubt that the answer of to-morrow would be : "Mr. Stuart I will be your wife." Meanwhile he was content to wait, and to anticipate happiness. He suspected that she was keeping him in suspense in order to test his love, and he thought with pride, "I will stand the test and she will be compelled to confess that she is faithful and she loves me."

He did not dream that she was testing his principles.



CHAPTER II.

"Would that ye could know self-mastery,
Better than that I cannot wish you."—*Sophocles' Ajax*.

In the office of "Kinglake, Dale and Osborne, Barristers, Attorneys-at-law," Edward Osborne was alone. Mr. Dale had early departed for the croquet party at Miss Harland's, and Mr. Kinglake was absent from town. All the afternoon the "great orb of day" had been pouring its beams untiringly through the narrow panes of the windows, until every speck of dust on desks and chairs was painfully visible. It was burying itself in golden clouds in the west just as Edward closed the large book he was reading and prepared for departure.

"Whew! It's hot here," he said to himself as he looked around the close, dusty room. "I believe on my way home I'll stop and get something cool and refreshing. I've put in a better day's work than I did yesterday. Nell will be pleased. Oh! that reminds me of my promise. I came near forgetting. Pshaw! I don't think one glass would hurt me, and I am so thirsty someway; but then I promised Eleanor I would not taste a drop to-day, and it would never do for her not to trust me again."

His sister might have been a little less disconsolate could she have seen the restraining force of her earnest words.

He put on his hat, and was arranging some papers in his desk, when a showily dressed man passed the window, saw him and entered the office. He shook Edward's hand warmly. "I'm glad to see you've recovered from the severe illness which afflicted you so grievously. We were very much concerned about you. Ha, ha ! Davenport went up to your house yesterday and the person who opened the door said you were slightly better. Great fun that ! We had a good laugh over it afterwards."

Edward smiled, though he blushed hotly. The other went on : "Are you most through your work ? I've bought that horse at last. By jove ! he's a grand one ; and I came to invite you to take a drive out to Weston. We'll get back about ten o'clock, and then we'll meet Davenport and have some fun."

"Thank you, Patterson, but I positively can't. I must be home to tea to-night for I am going out with my sister. But does the horse go well?"

"Just like the wind."

"I hope he is a little more visible and not quite so airy."

"Oh ! of course, though he is fleet," returned the matter-of-fact Patterson. "But Osborne you can drive through the park just to try him, and I'll take you home by tea-time."

It required a little resolution and courage still to say "no" to this entreaty, and Edward hesitated. He had said to Eleanor he would be home to tea, not before, and there could be no harm in just driving through the park. But then he was conscious of his want of strength, and dimly suspected that once in the carriage, driving after a high spirited horse, with a lively companion by his side he might at last be induced to break his promise. Then in fancy he saw his sister's sad reproachful face, and heard again her passionate request. That very moment his thoughts took shape in words: "No, Patterson, I really cannot go. And yet, no—yes I will to-morrow, if Dale is at his post, here."

That settled the matter, so with a few more words the young men separated. It was already six o'clock and fearful he would be late Edward walked up Bunton street at a brisk rate, reaching the gate of his home just as Mrs. Harland's carriage drove up with Eleanor. He opened the door and gave her his hand. As she looked up and saw he was perfectly *himself*, her whole face lit up with joy: "Oh Teddie, you're a real good boy!"

Such praise was worth much to him.

If we had been there in that home we would surely have considered Eleanor the sunshine and light of it. Her refined and cultured taste was perceptible everywhere—in the disposal of the furniture and pictures, the flowers in the several

rooms, the books scattered around. Mrs. Osborne was naturally neither cheerful nor demonstrative, and since the death of her husband every thought and feeling seemed influenced by a great absorbing grief. She was indeed a care-worn woman, troubled about many things; a face out of which seldom flashed joy; more restless struggling in the heart than reliant trust. The power of a mother's influence is incalculable. The atmosphere is buoyant or depressed, in harmony with every phase of her thought and feeling, and Eleanor always tried to lighten the home shadows by appearing joyous herself, even in spite of conditions directly opposed to the cultivation of joy.

After tea she was sewing something for Edward when Minnie came and sat down by her and watched her awhile in silence. She looked up at the earnest little face but waited for her to speak. "Do you love to do that?" was asked finally.

"No I don't think I really do."

"What do you do it for then?"

"Because I want to I suppose."

Minnie laughed at the paradox, but said soberly, "I wish we needn't ever do things we didn't like."

"What is it now darling?"

"Oh! I hate to tell you when you're always doing things for him; but Teddie wants me to do things for him, and Jennie Greene says boys

ought to wait on girls, and I said I'd ask you about it for you'd know. I think Teddie ought to help himself, so there!"

Eleanor with difficulty repressed a laugh over this curious speech, and asked gently, "Do you really think Teddie is unreasonable?"

"I don't know, only I can't stand it. When he got home he wanted me to go down to the flowerman's for him. I said Aleck could go. Now he himself isn't too tired to go to a party, but I ache so I wouldn't go if I had a chance."

Eleanor put down her work and administered a little sisterly counsel : "I think Minnie, that sisters should make home just as pleasant as possible for their brothers, and they cannot do this unless they give up a little of their own pleasure and comfort. Life is made beautiful and happy by these little services. You and I must work very hard so that Edward may have no excuse for seeking elsewhere what he can get at home. We do not know from what we can keep him—keep him from being what so many brothers are. Will you try?"

Minnie did not fail to see the tremble of Eleanor's lips, and she exclaimed impulsively : "Indeed I will try. I'll be as nice as sugar to him forever and ever. But here he comes!" "What's that about being as nice as sugar; do you mean that Nell is?" asked Edward sitting down,

"No I was talking about my trials with Aleck, and I said I'd heap coals of fire, etc," answered Minnie, demurely.

"Look out you don't singe him. It wouldn't be the first time. A glance of thine eye is enough to set me on fire. It's time the boy was back."

"Where has he gone?"

"I ordered some white roses for you on my way down this morning, and did not have time to call for them, so he went for me."

"Oh Eleanor, you'll look so lovely when you're dressed with roses in your hair!" The little girl's eyes danced.

"I wouldn't wonder if somebody else would think so too," said Edward mischievously.

"Who? Tell me, do! Ah! I know,—Mr. Stuart. Say, Eleanor, are you going to marry him, really and truly?" asked Minnie, rashly. "Jennie Greene said everybody said you were."

"She doesn't know, Min. Would you advise Nell to?"

"I'd marry a man I *choiced* very much."

"That's very philosophical, Eleanor. You had better act on the suggestion," laughed Edward as he rose.



CHAPTER III.

"I will call him a true great man ; great in intellect, in courage, affection and integrity."—*Curlyle's Heroes*,

It was half-past eight when Eleanor and Edward walked up the stone steps of Mr. Harland's elegant residence. The halls and parlors were one blaze of brilliancy, and the house being shielded from the street by thickly-growing elm trees, the windows were open, and the busy hum of many voices announced to them that the party had already begun.

Flo was standing near Mrs. Harland, and said to Eleanor as she returned her greeting : " Nell where is that cousin of mine ? He insisted on being excused from my strawberry tea-party, in order to go home and escort his venerable mother hither. I wanted him to help entertain the young people before their elders came. He said he would come back early anyway to arrange the music. Has he made his appearance yet ? "

Eleanor smiled as she answered : " I have not had the pleasure of seeing him since our disastrous game closed."

"Oh! wasn't it a funny game? You and that heartless cousin of mine are not suitable for partners. I was wishing, Nell," Flo lowered her voice to a whisper, "that if you are ever partners for life you will not be knocked around the world as roughly as your balls were this afternoon."

Eleanor's face flushed but she laughed at the roughish twinkle in her friend's eyes: "Your metaphorical application of our ill fortune is not legitimate if we are not suitable for partners."

"Oh! we need not take our game of croquet as symbolic in all its minor details of the game of life. A sunshiny lot for me would then be prophesied and I expect to be just as miserable, as abject and unhappy as you."

Several young gentlemen appeared at this stage of the conversation and made it more general.

Eleanor was in one of those quiet moods which usually oppressed her when feeling anxious and troubled, so after striving awhile to keep up a skirmish of small talk and repartee with them, she grew tired of it all, and watching her opportunity, she slipped away into a little sheltered nook behind a window, where she could give full attention to her own puzzled thoughts.

The extensive drawing-room, filling rapidly, stretched like a panorama before her. It had always been one of her favourite diversions, watching people, analyzing the expression of

their faces in order to guess the motives which rule their habitual action. But to-night she was just tired enough to passively look at the brilliant, restless throng, until her attention became concentrated on the face and figure of a gentleman standing near talking to Mr. Harland. The tone of his rich, clear voice every now and then reached her, although the distance prevented her guessing the subject in which he seemed to be so earnestly interested. His fine black hair was tossed back from a broad, intellectual forehead. The eye was bright and penetrating, though capable of expressing great tenderness. The heavy moustache did not completely hide the fine outline of the mouth. It was firm and decided; but the upward turn of the corners indicated a tendency, when occasion offered, to break into a smile. In fact, intelligence, decision and gentleness were most harmoniously combined in the whole expression of the face.

Eleanor's quick intuition told her that with her aspirations and thoughts he would have much sympathy—an opinion which never afterwards was changed.

After Mr. Harland had left him he remained in the same place looking at the people, his tall, slender figure leaning against a pillar. But soon he moved nearer Eleanor's retreat in order to examine a large stand of flowers, and noticed her scrutiny, for he had looked up before she had thought to avert her eyes. He slightly smiled

at sight of the fresh, girlish face, so unlike many he had seen that evening, and at the independent way she turned her head towards Flo who just then bustled up in her usual impetuous manner : " Now Eleanor, why do you hide yourself, when we want you to grace our party ? So many people (young gentlemen mostly, Miss Osborne) have come up to me and said,—' why where is your friend ? ' and I have had to inform them with a woe-stricken heart, that the fates or furies conveyed you just an hour ago to a place unknown. I positively had to look through an opera-glass before I could discover you. Just think ! that heartless, deceptive cousin of mine has not yet come. It is nearly ten o'clock and we have had so little music, and it's too warm to dance. Now Eleanor, tell me what has troubled you all day. I'll sit down on this sofa, and we will draw the curtains around so no one can see us. How refreshing the dim light is, as refreshing as the words of a true, sincere friend after being surfeited with flattery." The merry tone of the voice had changed, and with a little squeeze of Eleanor's hand she sat down.

" Are you sure you can be spared from everything ? "

" Yes, quite sure. The young people are scattered around on the verandah, and in the reception rooms, and will never miss me for about fifteen minutes. By that time Russell may arrive. Your brother Edward is the centre of a group of

ladies entertaining them beautifully. He is the very personification of agreeableness. Did you know you ought to be proud of him?"

Instead of answering Eleanor sighed bitterly. "Eleanor, tell me what makes you unhappy? Perhaps I could help you." The warm-hearted girl's voice trembled. "You do wrong to be so reserved with me. We could understand each other better if we could sympathize in our anxieties and cares as well as joys. Our friendship will be wanting in one of its most beautiful services if we thus fail to get comfort and sympathy from each other."

"Flo! you musn't think I am reserved, because I do not trust you. My only motive in not telling you before has been that I didn't wish to trouble you for nothing. My darling, your sympathy is indeed precious to me."

The young ladies were completely shielded by the heavy damask curtains and did not heed the noise and bustle outside.

Eleanor went on in a quick, nervous way: "For a year past, Flo, Edward has been in the habit of drinking, and has often come home intoxicated, but it was not until night before last that he was brought home by two dissipated looking men. I can't tell you how I felt,—it was so hard to see mother's tears, and hear her talk so hopelessly. The whole scene haunts me yet. It has seemed that I could not have it so. Edward was unable to leave home yesterday. One of those odious

men called to see how he was. Oh ! I didn't know he chose such men for companions. He surely would not in his reasonable moments. I have kept everything from the children, but I'm sure Min wondered why he talked and acted so strangely. If this goes on we will have to tell her the cause. This morning I got Edward to promise not to touch anything to-day, and the dear boy kept it—if he had not it seems as though I could never trust him again. All the time we were playing croquet this afternoon, I was haunted with the idea that he might be neglecting his business and disgracing himself. I have not dared to ask him not to take wine to-night, for I know he can't resist if a lady offers it to him. O Flo ! the influence of woman is so strong and far-reaching that if she only used it for good what a wonderful and glorious change would come over this sad earth of ours ! It would catch some of the beauty and brightness for which our weary hearts hunger and strive. And probably at supper to-night Edward will see these Christian men who ought to show him the loveliness of a high and holy life, free from all appearance of evil; see them drinking wine and urging him to do so, and then laughing at him, when he does and says those foolish things of which he would never be guilty when sober. Flo, I think, they, not he, are the most responsible. They thoughtlessly give the usage their sanction, and then put a stumbling block in his path heavenward. I

know that Hood said that evil is done from want of thought as well as want of heart, but it is evil nevertheless, with fearful consequences linked to it. I know that it is kind hospitality which prompts your father and mother to offer wine to their guests ; but if they could realize that they were giving Edward, and such as he poison—poison which unhappily does not kill immediately but which will make his purity, self respect and happiness die and perhaps destroy his soul forever, they might hesitate before placing the seductive wine before him."

Flo had listened in silence to the steady tones of Eleanor's voice, but as it grew low and tremulous with feeling she faltered out : " Oh Nell, I never dreamed it was such a terrible thing." " You have had no hard experience to bring the truth before you. Indeed I would not like you to share in the horror and dread with which I think of Edward's drinking this evening. I felt more like staying at home but he insisted on coming, and I thought if I were not here to go home with him, the very taste of the wine here might drive him to seek more elsewhere, and then what a coming home it would be ! Perhaps I imaginatively exaggerate the danger. But it cannot be so when he has fallen so often and given us such bitter sorrow."

A little silence fell between them, broken at last by Flo. " I know Eleanor, I must often have grieved you by laughing at what I have

called your extreme temperance principles. That cousin of mine, though never mentioning you except in highest terms, has undoubtedly much influenced me by regarding such principles as sentimental and puritanic. I have been too careless, Eleanor, and though I have had vague thoughts about personal responsibility my thoughts never took a definite form. But be assured that I will now help you all I can, even to going to my father, although I feel sure he will not allow the plans for supper to be altered. I wish he had different ideas on this question. Still not one of his family has been a drunkard, and he has been educated to believe that he is not doing his duty as a host unless he has wine for his guests. You know it is hard to give up customs and habits which he has seen in use since his boyhood. I do not justify him however Eleanor, for I think this custom inconsistent with the profession he makes as a Christian."

Flo hesitated a moment while the color deepened in her face. Then she said slowly: 'I have often made the inconsistency of some Christians an excuse for my own carelessness. I know you think that is not to the point—neither logical nor consistent in me. But I can't help it. My mind is not so logical as yours. But I think you're sincere and earnest; I really do Eleanor. In many ways of which you don't know you have taught me what my duty is. You remember

those lines in 'Kathrina' which you liked so much :

'She felt that if her *life* were not an argument
To move me, nothing that her lips might say
Could win me to her wish.'

I have watched you and seen the earnestness of your character ; felt the influence of your noble thoughts like an inspiration ; have admired your unselfish solicitude for the welfare of others. Minnie said to me only the other day that your home would be a regular smash-up if you weren't there. I did not need her enthusiastic praise to strengthen my own opinion, and yet it spoke well for the home-life. Many people think that I am too gay naturally to long remember anything, but you know me well enough to believe me when I promise, that henceforth the vague thoughts I have had of God and religion shall be purposes, ruling and guiding my life. How strangely we are mixing the serious with the gay to-night. Rather grave talk for a party," and Flo laughed nervously.

"What's this grave talk about?" asked a deep, manly voice as the curtain was pushed aside suddenly, revealing Mr. Stuart's handsome face.

"Russell! how dare you invade our fortress in this way? We carry a good many guns."

"I am painfully aware of that fact from my honorable scars, Flo. But why do you shut yourselves in here so exclusively?"

"We were disconsolate without you, and came to each other for comfort."

"That repays me for the disappointment of being kept from your side so long. But Flo tell me what great purposes are going to rule you. Are you going to turn temperance reformer? Has your mind imbibed some of Miss Osborne's favourite—"

"Do you suppose I am a weather vane to be turned about by every wind that blows?" interrupted Flo sharply.

"No, I had not forgotten my cousin's tenacity of opinion, nor her mental strength; but Miss Osborne's reasoning faculty is so subtle that if she tried to convince me that I had lost my identity, I am sure that my senses, imagination and will would be so mystified that I should believe her, and travel around the world shivering for its loss."

Miss Osborne smiled. If one feature in Mr. Stuart's character was prominently developed, it was his intense egotism—a thoroughly tight possession of himself.

Flo changed the subject by asking why he came so late. The whole expression of his face altered: it became dark and threatening, the heavy brows drawing together in a strange way, yet he answered with apparent indifference: "A little matter occurred to disturb my mother, and I remained to accompany her."

Both Eleanor and Flo wondered why a "little matter" should make him angry, but they made no enquiries, and he resumed: "I must apologize for breaking my promise, however if you will accompany me to the music-room I will do my best to repair the mischief caused by my non-appearance." His excitement disappeared as quickly as it had come; and he was the self-possessed, polished man of the world once more.

Later in the evening, Mr. Dale passing by a shaded window which commanded a view of the bright scene inside, espied Eleanor leaning in, listening intently to a nocturne of Chopin's played by Flo. The expression of her face was wistful and there was an unsatisfied look in her eyes.

"Does music have an unhappy effect on you, Miss Eleanor?" he asked pausing opposite her. "Yes; I believe such music does. I intensely enjoy it and yet it makes me restless; makes me feel as though I were striving after something I could never get. It indeed sometimes suggests a possibility of these longings being satisfied, but the suggestion is so faint, so indistinct that the heart longs for more tangible promise. Now Mendelssohn has such a different effect upon me. It is so restful to listen to some of his Songs without Words. But Chopin makes me think of what Richter said to music: 'Away, away! thou speakest to me of things which in all my endless life I have not found and shall not find.'"

Eleanor's face was in shadow but Mr. Dale's quick ear caught the change in her voice.

"It is very strange," he said, "that only a few moments ago I heard Mr. Seymour quote that sentence to Mrs. Harland. By the way I must introduce you in order that you may compare sensations. He's a stranger in town and hardly knows any one here."

Mr. Dale darted off and soon returned with the gentleman Eleanor had noticed talking to Mr. Harland the former part of the evening. The introduction served only as a herald of names; it did not seem that they were strangers at all.

"There must be a sort of mesmeric communication between you two," said Mr. Dale laughing. "In the space of ten minutes I hear the same sentence quoted from a poet not generally read; you both seem to be made unhappy by a certain kind of music and fly to Richter to find expression for your feeling. You remember that Schiller says that great souls have kindred with each other; and I must say there *is* a sort of affinity between different people."

"Do you agree with Schiller?" asked Eleanor looking towards Mr. Seymour.

"If I said I did I should be charged with assuming that *we* are great souls, whereas—"

"When did you read Richter, Phil? You know we couldn't unravel his phraseology when we were cramming."

"The idea he expressed is quoted by Emerson in one of his essays. I was reading it this afternoon, and it came with great force into my mind while hearing Miss Harland play. How singular it is that one of her vivacious temperament can play so sympathetically, with such exquisite perception of the meaning the composer wished to convey. A superficial critic would insist that she was only capable of fully appreciating lively, shallow music, like Strauss' waltzes for instance, not this deep-hearted, spiritual kind. But what do you say Dale?"

"Oh! I shall leave you to settle that question without my help. There's an old lady on the other side of the room who needs a nice little talk from me. Now keep out of deep waters while discussing matters and things. People can get drowned in metaphysics, you know." And with a smile the gentleman walked slowly away.

There was one part of the verandah which because far removed from the drawing-room had not attracted many groups of people. It was cool and quiet, where moonlight rays shone. Mr. Seymour brought two chairs and they sat down. Just the time and place for the exchange of fine thoughts and ideas, with nothing outwardly disturbing or annoying to mar the enjoyment. They indulged in no sentimental flirtation or small talk,—Eleanor being in too earnest and thoughtful a mood to have sustained such even had Mr. Seymour attempted it. But they chose

wider subjects ; spoke of representative men and women even around whose *names* cluster such endearing associations of nobility and true greatness ; of social problems and reforms ; of books, how many they had read and loved !—and their hearts grew warm and enthusiastic over the discussion of the merits of their mutual favorites. They did not agree on all points ; but who would have them ? Conversation is tame and profitless without some argument to give it piquancy, and opinions need opposition to gather strength and force.

They were quite oblivious of time. But at the end of an hour and a half, when supper was announced, Russell Stuart was glad of an excuse to seek Eleanor. He had some difficulty in finding her cosy retreat, and laughingly said as he carried her off on his arm that she was constantly hiding from him that evening.

At supper Eleanor found herself placed in a corner with Mrs. Stuart, who, notwithstanding her age, was considered the handsomest woman in the room. This combined with a cultivated intellect and high social position, made her patronage flattering and agreeable. And Eleanor was not insensible to the fact. Not far from her was seated Miss Yarling, a fashionable young lady from the South whom Edward was serving ; and a little further on still was Flo, looking happy and contented under the care of Mr. Dale.

Mrs. Stuart leaned graciously towards Eleanor and addressed her :

" Has Russell given you my message yet, Miss Osborne?"

Russell answered quickly for her : " No mother. I have not had an opportunity all the evening, she has been so monopolized by others."

Mrs. Stuart smiled indulgently at her half-impatient son, while Eleanor spoke : " You were wholly absorbed in the music, and its beauty was indeed enough to prevent you from delivering messages."

Mr. Stuart only smiled reply and went after some refreshments.

Miss Yarling was talking extravagantly about the superior charm of operatic music over classical as Mr. Stuart passed. Edward interrupted her raptures by asking what wine she preferred. " Whichever you and Mr. Stuart like best, Mr. Osborne. I think ladies in this matter should be entirely under the guidance of the gentlemen. Their opportunities for forming an opinion are not so limited as ours."

Mr. Stuart paid no attention to her remarks and Edward answered ; " I like port very much, will that be agreeable ?"

" Indeed it will if you will take a glass with me just to assure me that it will not poison," and she laughed at what she considered a most witty speech.

" Certainly, with pleasure. I never knew wine to poison unless taken injudiciously," he replied.

Eleanor and Flo exchanged glances. There was sorrow and dread in one girl's eyes; strong determination in the other's. Just then Mr. Dale brought the latter a glass of sherry. "No thank you," she said simply.

"Do you not prefer this? I brought it because you usually take this kind," he explained.

Her voice was low yet not wavering in her answer: "I do not wish for any kind, Mr. Dale. I have given it up, not only for this evening but for all time. I sincerely hope you will do the same. Now promise right off."

"I suppose it is not a *very* sensible practice, but then I shall want time for consideration."

"Oh! I'll give you just three minutes in the corner for grave and heart-searching meditation."

He laughed at her curious blending of the comic with the serious; but could not resist her impetuous pleading. At last he promised.

Meanwhile Edward and Miss Yarling were playfully debating whether they should not drink to some one's health and happiness. She proposed "their host's fair daughter." Edward eagerly assented and called on Mr. Stuart for the speech. Miss Harland heard with blushing cheeks and down-cast eyes. Then making an effort to overcome the diffidence and constraint with which she always spoke of things which might excite ridicule, she raised her eyes to

Edward and said gravely; "Just *think* your good wishes; it will be as well as drinking them in wine."

Miss Yarling laughed as though much amused and looked curiously at the speaker. Mr. Stuart frowned and said the pleasure would be all gone.

"That is one mistake we make about it Russell. If all the associations of friendship and good fellowship which cluster around the habit of social drinking were taken away, its evil might be more painfully visible."

There is nothing like a strong emotion to show the need of more noble action, and Flo's hastily formed opinions in regard to temperance, had deepened into broad, strong principles since her conversation with Eleanor. Intense and enthusiastic in everything she was going to carry the same intensity and earnestness into this new life of hers, and with God's help she would make its influence strong and decided.

Just then Mrs. Stuart began talking, and thus prevented Eleanor from hearing more. "My message was this, Miss Osborne. Russell has to start early to-morrow morning for New York. A telegram came this evening. He expects to be gone at least a week. I wish you and Florence Harland to visit me a day or two during his absence. Flo says I may find it difficult to persuade you, as you are quite a recluse. But I do not despair of your acceptance of my invitation."

Eleanor's face flushed. Under some circumstances she could not go she said.

"But Miss Osborne you must come. I insist on it. You are Flo's friend; and I claim you for her sake if not for Russell's."

Mrs. Stuart seemed so disappointed at even a conditional refusal, that at last Eleanor yielded a reluctant consent.

* * * * *

"Do you think that lady pretty over there, Mr. Seymour? Your eyes for the last minute have been very truant in that direction. Do you know her well?"

Mr. Seymour started from his abstraction and smiled gravely at the speaker. "As I am almost a total stranger in your city, Mrs. Yates, I cannot say that I know any one well. I received an introduction to Miss Osborne this evening, and consider her very agreeable."

"Rather reticent praise, considering she has won the admiration of such a fastidious man as Mr. Russell Stuart. For my part I don't see in what lies the attraction for him. He has the pick of the garden. They say the marriage is to take place very soon, and then they go to Europe. It is a splendid chance for any girl, and especially for her. She isn't at all well off, and though her brother is very clever, his chances of success are being spoiled by such dissipated habits. They do say he is *very* irregular. I should think that Mr. Stuart would hesitate about incurring the

risk of disgrace. He is so very proud. They say however that the match was made by Miss Harland, who thinks *everything* of her friend, and could wish no better fortune than that she should be the wife of a man worth half a million, and master of Leathdale."

Mr. Seymour was listening with a feeling of blended aversion and disappointment, but as he was too well bred to show his feeling the unconscionable gossip went on: "Leathdale is a perfectly lovely place, enough to make any girl jump at the chance of getting possession. You have not seen it? Oh! you should by all means before you leave the city.... What a fine brilliant looking woman Mrs. Stuart is! Quite a contrast to her prospective daughter-in-law. Though rather intellectual looking and with grand eyes, she has no style and is positively too subdued and quiet."

"But there is great strength of will and force of character expressed in her face," Mr. Seymour ventured.

"If so I wonder how the two will agree? It's my opinion there will be a good deal of clashing. They say Mrs. Stuart has not at all a submissive spirit. There have been reports that her husband's life was not exactly happy. He died very soon after his father, and never lived at Leathdale during his marriage. Russell's been master ever since he was about fifteen,—

enough to make any boy proud and overbearing, isn't it?"

* * * * *

"Eleanor how pale you are! Don't you feel well?" enquired Mr. Stuart anxiously as he offered her his arm to escort her to the drawing-room.

She answered almost haughtily, "I was not aware of being otherwise. No thank you, don't offer me *that*!"

"Proud, self-reliant, yet charming as usual," he said to himself as he left her. "Will she never learn to trust me?"

While the gentlemen were at supper the ladies amused themselves in various ways. Flo flitted from one group to another, entertaining all by her merry chatter, though they wondered at her restless manner. Eleanor seated herself where she could see the door of the dining-room, which was left slightly ajar. The first gentleman to come out was Mr. Seymour, followed soon after by Mr. Stuart and a few others. When Edward finally made his appearance, Eleanor saw there had been grounds for her worst fears. Mr. Seymour, who stood not far away, noticed a quick expression of pain and utter hopelessness cross her face, leaving it very pale. Mr. Stuart uttered a sharp expression of impatience about the anticipated drive home being spoiled. Eleanor turned around and said in a low voice, "I would not think of his going with you."

He looked relieved though the expression in her eyes startled him.

"But I shall go with him." she said with dignity.

"Impossible! It would be imprudent, most imprudent. Besides you are tired, and as we go past your house you must go with us. Were it not for my mother I should insist on taking your brother also."

"I wish to be independent of your courtesy Mr. Stuart, when it does not include those I love."

"Pardon me. I hope all you love will make themselves worthy of my courtesy," retorted he, biting his lips with vexation.

Just then Flo who had been watching from the other side of the room Eleanor's face, though the distance prevented her hearing the low tones of her voice, stepped hastily up to Mr. Seymour and said a few words. The next moment Eleanor heard a deep voice at her side say gently : "Miss Osborne will you entrust your brother to me? Miss Harland has kindly offered the use of her carriage," Mr. Seymour added as he caught the grateful flash of Miss Osborne's eyes. "Though her proposal be assured I shall assume the charge with great pleasure."

"Thank you; and may I drive with you?"

"No," answered Mr. Stuart decidedly, though he smiled. "I want you with me. You are certainly very kind sir," he added, turning to

Mr. Seymour with lofty condescension. "Allow me to accompany you to the hall and introduce you to Mr. Osborne." * * * *

The drive home with the Stuarts was remarkably silent.



CHAPTER IV.

“ It is hard to meet with stiff denials
Those who ask for love ;
Or having met with good at others hands, to fail in
Rendering good for good received.”—*Sophocles.*

The moonlight was a relief from the hot glare of gaslight, and the little room refreshingly still after the noise and confusion of the party. Eleanor sat down on a low seat by the window, where she could feel the cool night air blow upon her flushed cheeks. Her usual way of meeting trouble was not by tears ; but here alone, with no external check present, tired and nervous with excitement, she felt that control was no longer possible. Her heart was in a whirl of conflicting emotions, and more than half an hour passed ere she had quieted them enough to think calmly about the irrevocable decision which to-night must be formed in relation to the answer Mr. Stuart would expect when he returned.

Away down town a solitary man was walking rapidly in the moonlight towards his hotel, and as he walked he thought of her. “ She is truly a woman who would be an inspiration to a man ! But that Stuart is not worthy of her. He will

attempt to lower her aspirations, grind with harsh hand the nobility out of her life. But she must love him, for I do not believe she has been won by his manifestations of love, however delicately offered, or fascinated by the charm of his wealth and culture... I can only wish her to be happy, and pray God to guide her over the rough places stretching away into the future... But I must not indulge in this useless sentiment; having met her is but an episode in a life of change and homesickness. Singular that quotation from Richter : ' Which in all my endless life I shall not find.' It's doubtless true, and I am destined to be a lonely, desolate fellow. Why is it some men get all the sunlight while others live under heavy shadows ?' * * * * *

Was it an echo of Mr. Seymour's thoughts in Eleanor's heart that she was haunted by such forebodings of evil and unhappiness to-night?

Was Russell Stuart true and noble? She knew he lacked that reverence and love for a personal, ever present God, which alone exalts and ennobles character. Indeed he had often expressed his conviction that a theistic belief is but a ghost of man's imagination, a mere striving of his intellect to pierce the dense obscurity surrounding the realities of the "unknown." If she trusted her heart to him could she resist the daily influence of this cold, joyless skepticism, and keep her own faith strong and bright?

She knew their individual natures would often

strike fire, because she suspected that he was enough of a tyrant to exact absolute obedience to his wishes, and agreement with his views of life. And this homage she *would not* yield, possessing as she did a disposition self reliant and inflexible as his own. With nothing to guide him but his fallible intellect, he would not be justified in assuming ability to guide her steps, especially if the path lay through cloud and storm. And she knew she would not have sufficient faith in his superior insight and wisdom to follow with confidence. In point of fact her impression was that in many things her judgment was more reliable than his ; but Mr. Stuart would consider this high treason in his wife, needing vigorous measures for its suppression. Now with this difference in belief, in aims and purposes, a condition rendering her powerless to give him the trust and loyalty her woman's heart so longed to give, would not their marriage be a mere delusive mockery of the joy, the transcendent beauty it should possess ?

Moreover Eleanor prophetically felt that in her earnest efforts for her brother's best welfare she need expect no sympathy or assistance from Russell,—rather opposition, or harder to bear, chilling indifference. The events of this afternoon and evening had taught her this conclusively.

Her pleadings and entreaties with Edward had often been met by the question that if a young

man of Mr. Stuart's position and great strength of character considered it wise to drink wine, and was not injured thereby, what possible harm for him? (Thus by an universal and necessary law one life is always touching another, and humanity is linked together by influences stretching far away into the eternal future of God's mysterious and inexplicable government.) No wonder grim visions of evil and disaster floated before Eleanor's excited imagination at the anticipation of the effect of Mr. Stuart's continual influence. This of itself would be sufficient cause for her to give him up, considering her own happiness, but as dust in the balance in comparison with her brother's eternal good. But this fearful sacrifice of her happiness was not required. She had thought she could be Mr. Stuart's wife, else she would never have kept him waiting for his answer. Any woman feels glad when she is thus honored and loved, and it requires a careful analysis of one's emotions and motives in order to feel sure that this gladness and joy are not a return of affection. But now interrogating her heart closely in the light of this evening's events, she found that she had enjoyed his attentions, the courtesy and thoughtful kindness which women think so charming, the long talks which had stimulated her intellect to untiring exertions in order that the glorious treasures of thought and of knowledge, might become abiding possessions; and yet she had not,

nor could she ever *love* him. So the conclusion of her reasoning was decisive. She gave up all the alluring plans for self-culture which had been formed for the future, all the bright possibilities of usefulness which wealth and position offered, and resolved to study for a while longer the meaning of her old life, to make home pleasant and happy for Edward, and to still more anxiously endeavour to drive away the damp, dark shadows clustering around her mother's mind ; meanwhile praying God to send some day a new interest, an absorbing love to fill the void created in her own longing, tired heart.



CHAPTER V.

"As I have seen a ship go down in quiet waters suddenly."

"A ship aground is a beacon at sea."

"A note for you Miss Harland. The man says he will stop for the answer on his way home from town."

Flo had been compelled to entertain visitors all day, and in consequence of the excitement and effort of talking, was now suffering from an intense nervous headache. She raised up from the lounge and broke open the envelope :

"Dear Florence.

"Russell has been gone two days and Leathdale has been desolate, yet you and Miss Osborne have not fulfilled your promise. I will send the carriage to-morrow at any time you say. I suppose you will see Miss Osborne to-night, and learn her decision. I trust she will allow nothing to prevent her appearance ; she has refused so many invitations that I am distrustful of the power of this one."

"Sarah tell James to get the phæton ready immediately. I wish to drive myself to Miss Osborne's."

Then with her accustomed energy, despite aching head and throbbing nerves, Flo sprang up to prepare for her drive.

As she passed through the hall she was met by a servant bearing a card. "A gentleman in the reception room. He asked for Mrs. Harland but she hasn't come home."

"I regret your mother's absence Miss Harland," Mr. Seymour said, as Flo advanced to meet him. "I leave for New Orleans to-morrow and shall therefore have no opportunity to renew an acquaintance commenced so happily the other evening."

She answered with reciprocal sincerity: "I am sure we were all glad you honored us by coming with Mr. Dale. But for your kind informality we should have missed a good deal. But you will come again?"

"Thank you. I cannot tell whether I shall ever visit your city again. I had some business here in the law courts, and accidentally ran across Mr. Dale. We were old college friends, hence were overjoyed at the meeting."

"You must then have known my cousin Russell Stuart, for he was a class-mate of Mr. Dale's. He appeared to meet you as a stranger here, however."

Flo was hardly prepared for the strange expression of contempt and anger which shot across her companion's face. Before she could fully comprehend its meaning it was gone. But his

voice was cold and constrained in its answer : "I knew him very well. We were friends until we knew each other better. I had the misfortune to cross his path once and he never forgave me."

"That is just like Russell. He wants to be the first stone in the pond, even at the risk of covering up other stones. I think he would be willing to have us all moss-grown if only he might be the active one." Flo's irresistible penchant for metaphor, often led her into deep waters.

"Your diagnosis of his case is striking," laughed Mr. Seymour, "but this time it is not quite accurate. It was only a personal matter, not one of scholastic competition. In that he was far ahead of me."

Mr. Seymour did not think it necessary to contrast the difference in his advantages ; nor to explain that his college course had been one long struggle with poverty. "But there is your carriage Miss Harland. I must not detain you."

"There is no hurry. I am only going over to El—to Miss Osborne's to arrange about a visit to Leathdale. Cannot you accompany me?"

"No thank you, but I will send a good-bye to your friend."

"Oh ! isn't she lovely, Mr. Seymour ? I don't know what I should do without her. She is such a comfort to every one." Rash Flo little dreamed of the great throb of pain which darted through the manly heart beside her, but he outwardly was calm and self-possessed. "I do not

doubt that the comfort is reciprocal as well as the friendship," he replied as he rose.

* * * * *

To Eleanor's sensitive pride the very idea of the visit to Leathdale caused much pain, and yet the conditions of her promise were such that she could not consistently change the plans.

She and Flo spent the evening pleasantly, and at half-past ten, ascended the broad stairs to retire. The upper hall was long rather than broad, with the doors of the several bedrooms opening into it. At the far end was a large heavy door, which Eleanor supposed led into a stairway, leading up to another story.

The room assigned to the two guests was on the opposite side to Mrs. Stuart's. They stopped to bid her good-night. "I think you should lock your door," she said. "I always do even when Russell is here. He says it is the safest."

But they demurred, thinking it would be more lonely.

Her face grew grave and sad: "It is a lonely old house, even when full of company,—much more on a night like this. I really think you would sleep better with your door locked. Yet if you prefer it I will leave my own ajar, so if you are awake at any time you can speak to me."

It was not long before Eleanor and Flo were both sleeping. The night was dark and moon-

less, and the atmosphere hot and close. But after two or three hours a strong wind came up—the herald of a storm.

The care and anxiety weighing on Eleanor's heart had lately made her a light sleeper, easily disturbed by any unusual noise or atmospheric change. About this time she awoke suddenly and started up in bed, confused and bewildered. Then when she saw the light shining down in the lower hall, she remembered where she was, and lay back to court the return of slumber. But that capricious deity does not always come when courted ; her senses were now fully on the alert, and she could sleep no more. A strange sensation crept over her. She became conscious of some human presence near at hand. It was not in her room, because she heard distinctly a soft footfall out in the hall. She could not attribute this to the not unusual creaking of the wood-work, nor to the wind blowing through the house. The head of the bed was toward the door and at last she ventured to look out. The light from the hall lamp was so dim that at first nothing could be distinguished. Then she saw distinctly the tall figure of a man standing by Mrs. Stuart's door. His face was pale and haggard, with heavy, dark rims around the eyes. The eyes themselves were wild and restless, with a crafty, cunning look in them which sent a thrill of terror through Eleanor. His hair was black, streaked with grey, long and fell disorderly on his bent shoulders.

After standing there a moment restlessly toying with the handle of Mrs. Stuart's door—although no sound disturbed the silence which reigned through the house, he took a few steps into the middle of the hall and looked down the broad stairs as though watching some one coming up, meanwhile beckoning to an imaginary person behind. Then he turned towards Eleanor's room and the light fell full in his face. The eyes were dead and spiritless now, with no trace of their former wildness. Walking slowly past towards the large door which now stood open, he hesitated, looked back once more towards Eleanor, then shut it and disappeared as noiselessly as he had come.

Ere she had time to guess the meaning of this strange apparition, Mrs. Stuart appeared in the hall. She had thrown a loose dressing gown around her, and the candle which she carried showed her face to be almost startling in its paleness. She looked anxiously around, and then came to Eleanor's bedside. "Are you awake?" she whispered.

"Yes."

"I was afraid so. Have you seen or heard anything?"

"Yes," was the laconic answer.

"Were you startled?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry, but do compose yourself and sleep. I assure you there is no cause for fear.

I will go and examine and explain in the morning. Florence is asleep? It is best so," Mrs. Stuart added, significantly.

"Yes, I understand."

"Thank you. I wish you had had your door locked. Good-night."

"But Mrs. Stuart, where are you going?" asked Eleanor, in an impulsive whisper.

"I fear John has been drinking and left the doors up there unlocked. I must go and investigate."

"Don't you need me?"

She was answered by a sigh of relief: "I shall be so glad unless you are afraid."

Eleanor threw a cloak over her and lighting another candle accompanied Mrs. Stuart. John was indeed found to be in a drunken stupor and could lend no assistance, so they passed alone through the large door, which opened into a long, dark hall. The candles flickered fitfully and the forms of the two women cast weird shadows on the gloomy walls. Eleanor was strangely impressed by the darkness and the mystery connected with the events of this night, and though she expected any moment to see the tall figure of the maniac, she followed her guide with a brave heart. The hall terminated by a flight of steps, at the top of which was another heavy door. Mrs. Stuart saw no key in the lock. "He must have fastened it on the other side," she said. "If he should suddenly open it and you see the key, take it out while I am talking to him."

But Eleanor's bare foot had struck something solid on one of the steps, and lowering her candle she perceived the missing key. "We are all right now," exclaimed Mrs. Stuart, seizing it quickly and transferring it to the lock. They both breathed more freely now, and the transit along the halls back to their rooms was made quickly and in silence.

Flo slept through the night oblivious of everything but the sweet dreams of healthful girlhood, and though at breakfast she secretly wondered at Eleanor's haggard face and Mrs. Stuart's gloomy abstraction, she gave full vent to her usual flow of joyous, merry talk, and asked no personal questions.

A propitious opportunity occurred for the promised explanation, when she strolled off to the drawing-room for an hour's private enjoyment with the piano. So Mrs. Stuart conducted Eleanor to the library and established her on a sofa while she talked.

"Years ago, Eleanor," she began, "one lovely June morning, a young girl stood up by a gentleman's side in a little village church, and the minister called them husband and wife. He swore to love, protect and cherish her, and she, with the trusting faith of girlhood, believed him. A few short years of happiness flew swiftly by : the sun shone bright and glorious, and the sky was clear. The wife thought her life to be all blissful,—a sweet frag-

ment of the Eden, lost to every human soul. But a cloud appeared, when the husband began to be harsh, neglectful, irritable. Those were anxious, troubled years. But soon the dark and heavy clouds of sorrow rolled across their lives and completely obscured the former brightness and glory, when he drank so deeply as to lose his reason, and that intellect, noted for its strength and keen flashing brilliancy, became a complete wreck. Eleanor, the cloud has never lifted ;—you know it all now. The demon intemperance has ruined my husband's life, blighted my happiness, and now all that remains of the man I once loved, yea madly worshipped, is that incurable maniac, walking restlessly up and down in his wretched loneliness. Oh Eleanor ! if I could only have laid him in his grave in the beauty of his spotless manhood ; then my grief would not be despair, agony !”

Mrs. Stuart covered her face with her hands—hiding its restless, excited expression. A moment after she said more calmly : “ The change came all at once. We were in Europe and the news arrived of his father's death, and that Leathdale would henceforth be our home. The shock of grief, and the excitement caused by the contemplation of the new life before him must have shattered the mind already weakened. Russell was then fifteen. We came home. Everyone here thinks my husband is dead—not even Flo has been told ; but of course

her parents know the sad facts,—Mrs. Harland being my sister. I am sorry you were frightened last night ; and yet, I had determined that you should know all the secrets of our life here at Leathdale. A long discussion was necessary to obtain Russell's consent, and it was yielded at last reluctantly. He will be very angry with John, and perhaps reproach me for not more carefully watching him ; but he has always been so trustworthy that what occurred was a great surprise to me. Only once before has anything of the kind happened. As we were starting for Mrs. Harland's the other evening, we found that John had gone down to supper, leaving the doors unlocked, and that he my—my husband had gone into Russell's library. It was that which made us so late at the party. Oh ! how bitterly angry Russell was ! I had hoped his threats and warnings would be sufficient."

She paused, thinking her own sad thoughts. Eleanor who had listened with a feeling of awe to the restlessly spoken words, had never dreamed but that Mrs. Stuart was the happiest of women ; but now she knew she had never seen an expression of such woe and utter hopelessness on any face before. The spring-time blossoms of gladness and joy had been blighted by the foul, scorching breath of sin and wrong, and lay withered and dead before the summer had ended.

"Eleanor !" she exclaimed vehemently, " Intemperance is the curse of this world ! See the

fine minds it has destroyed, the homes it has made sad and cheerless, the hearts it has broken with sorrow. Our churchyards are full of its victims ; our mad-houses ;” (Mrs. Stuart shivered) “ and yet men will shut their eyes to the misery it causes, and rush headlong to ruin. I see that the shadows are clustering around your home too ; but there is hope for you, because you are more aware of the danger than I was. Young, thoughtless, ignorant of the world, I could not see the fearful whirlpool before him, and so often helped him towards it, as many women are doing to-day, by upholding the social custom of drinking wine, thereby leading hundreds into bondage and death. If women would only learn that wine is their worst foe, that its use has blasted more of their hopes, and darkened all the joy of their lives, I am sure they would fight against it with their whole strength. I have tried so hard to persuade my sister, Mrs. Harland, that she is abusing her opportunities for influence. Oh ! Eleanor, be firm in your course ; let your efforts never cease to win your brother back.”

“ And yet Mr. Stuart tells me there is no harm in Edward’s tendency.”

“ Russell ? Ah ! you have no conception how he grieves me. He feels very bitter towards his father for all my sorrow, and blames him far more than he deserves. Because he is strong enough to never lose control of his appetite he has little sympathy for those who are tempted

more than they can bear. I do not distrust his power and strength, yet no man is quite safe who is indifferent,—he needs strong, well defined principles. He continually assures me that with such a terrible example before him he is too wise and prudent to ever fall. He takes wine very seldom certainly, and yet it is his nature to wish to be able to do everything, to possess everything. I should feel much happier if his heart were not so bitterly proud, if he had more sympathy for those weak stumblers the Bible tells about. A strange, exceptional effect his father's terrible fate has had upon his whole character."

It is not known how the talk would have ended for it was interrupted by a servant announcing morning visitors from the city.

Mrs. Stuart rose, a faint smile crossing her beautiful face, as she said half sarcastically, yet very sadly to Eleanor: "You see it is the old tragedy of life enacted over and over again. I must go down, and laugh and talk with them and appear gay and happy, while my heart is breaking. Oh! it is hard, hard!"

Eleanor's heart was too full of sympathy to speak. She silently put out her hand with an eager, impulsive movement.

The real Mrs. Stuart looked long and searchingly into the young girl's troubled face; then the next moment put on her mask, which Eleanor never saw again lifted, and went down to meet her friends.

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CHAPTER VI.

"We all do stamp our value on ourselves. The price we challenge for ourselves is given us."—Schiller's *Wallenstein*.

Press of business and annoying delays kept the master of Leathdale absent from his elegant home for two whole weeks. The cause of his journey was best known to his own proud, reserved heart, and although it had been undertaken unwillingly because of the unsettled condition of his love suit, the anticipation of happiness at the end kept him in good spirits.

On his return home from his cousin's croquet party, a letter on his library table awaited his attention. The fine brows drew together as his eye recognized the handwriting, and almost impatiently he tore open the envelope :

"MR. RUSSELL STUART,
Dear Sir,—

I never supposed the necessity of my addressing you would ever arise, and though regretting now that necessity, I trust your courtesy will prompt you to accede to my earnest request.

A few days ago I accidentally came across the young girl whom you once so deeply wronged by

telling her you loved her, and for a few months amusing yourself by winning her heart, when you knew you could never stoop to marry her. She is living in great destitution in N——, a little village near the sea-shore. You well remember that because I had no sympathy with your code of belief that such 'flirtations' are not dishonorable in a man once or twice in his life, because of this, our friendship was broken. I need not attempt to change your views. But I will say that it is your positive duty to go to her, relieve her present need, and place her beyond reach of future trouble. I do not think she will ever disagreeably trouble you. It is because I am absolutely unable to assist her permanently that I now point out to you your course of action.

Sincerely Yours,

PHILIP SEYMOUR."

That evening as Mr. Stuart was on his way to seek Eleanor and Flo's hiding place, he met Mr. Seymour at the drawing-room door. After the first shock of surprise, he said in a low voice but with his usual smooth politeness, "I have read your letter and owe you thanks for its interesting facts. I start to-morrow morning on the errand you impose. But Seymour," the voice sank almost to a whisper, "beware what you say to any of my friends here. Their 'code' is not mine—not so liberal." An evil smile distorted the handsome face.

The other answered frigidly: "Had I any good motive in exposing you, I should not hesitate. But doing so would not retrieve the past, nor restore her wrecked happiness. It would only pain your friends who trust in you."

"You speak wisely. I am glad your view of the case in question is such that I can admire. Good evening."

Everything at last was arranged to Mr. Stuart's satisfaction; and with a reckless forgetfulness of the dark sins of the past, and a confident looking forward to future joy, he was on his way home. But disappointment, bitter chagrin awaited him.



CHAPTER VII.

"Even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea."—*Swinburne*.

The two years which followed were years of deep experience to at least three of the persons in whom we are interested. Philip Seymour went back to his work far away,—and though everything connected with his single visit to the Harlands clung to his memory as closely as vines and ivies cling to solid masonry, he thought always of Eleanor as Russell Stuart's wife, and the man's strong will never allowed the faintest thought of love to find sympathy in his heart. And yet the words "it might have been otherwise" were often a sad accompaniment to the full harmony of the beautiful life he lived.

With Eleanor many things were different. Perhaps she missed Mr. Stuart more than she was really conscious of. There was little to enliven the dull monotony of her busy life. His intelligent, stimulating conversation, his keen, scholarly criticism of the books they read together, were now enjoyments of the past. Among her many friends, there were none quite so kind to her, certainly not so devoted, as he had been.

But Eleanor had been true to herself and to her ideas of duty, and knowing that what had interested her was not really himself, she only regretted his absence in the abstract.

It had been very hard to see the pain she gave him; and when he went abroad for a year, she felt responsible for his exile, and sharply blamed herself for Mrs. Stuart's inevitable loneliness. But he had come back; and the few times they had met assured her that time and absence had completely conquered the old love, although the wounds to his pride and egotism had left scars.

Thus while Eleanor's outward life was devoid of romance and absorbing interest, she lived an inner life of high aspiration and earnest thought which failed not to compensate for many losses. And yet the atmosphere of sorrow and constant anxiety in which she lived was telling upon her health and spirits. Edward went recklessly on his downward path and saw not, or affected not to see, that the sister he so much loved, who seldom failed to give him sympathy and affection, was daily growing more careworn and grave. Yet sometimes hours of bitter self-condemnation came to him; and when she would talk to him about the fatal habit which was undermining his life, he would resolve to snap the fetters which bound him and be free. But they had grown too strong for him to break alone; and he, in his self-reliant weakness did not solicit the help of God. Indeed if it had not been for Eleanor's influ-

ence it is not known where he would have ended. The fear of entirely destroying her faith, restrained him from committing many of the excesses in which his companions indulged ; her advice and warnings and entreaties kept him from plunging headlong into that maelstrom of intemperance out of which no man comes alive.

But he was losing prestige rapidly. That air of general wretchedness which dissipation brings in place of the freshness and happiness it takes away, clung to him closely now. He was not so careful in his dress as he once had been, his broad shoulders stooped, his firm, manly step grew irregular and tottering. Hardest of all to bear, his former acquaintances looked coldly on him ; and those friends, at whose homes he had learned to drink, wondered " why he could be so utterly foolish, so blind to his chances of success in his profession, as to thus lose his respectability and ruin his prospects." Yet with this very meditation resting in their minds, this warning example gleaming before their consciences, they would go home and offer to their children, to their guests, the same glasses filled with the sparkling wine, out of which he had once drunk, and afterwards pray to be led not into temptation, to be delivered from evil. When will such men and women realize that they hinder the progress of truth, holiness and justice, which is to triumph over injustice, falsehood and evil in this our sorrow-shadowed world ?

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At last one snowy day in December, Mr. Kinglake called him into his private office, and informed him that as he was so irregular in his attendance to business he must withdraw from the firm. This blow to his pride, to his honor struck home to his heart. With a hopeless look on his pale face, he mechanically signed the papers, and taking his hat and coat went out. Mr. Dale met him in the outer office and said kindly, "I am sorry you are going Osborne. I would do anything if I could help you in any way."

Edward silently shook his hand,—he could not trust his voice to speak.

"Flo will be very sorry for you and your sister... Can't you give up drinking Osborne, and make your mother's life a little brighter towards its close?"

Edward bowed his head upon the railing of his desk—the desk which had been his for six long years. Mr. Dale saw he was trying to conceal the tears in his eyes. "Mr. Harland was saying the other day, it was such a pity that a young man of your ability and legal advantages should throw away your chances."

"He has himself to thank for it," came from between Edward's tightly compressed lips.

"What's that?"

"I say he can thank himself for it," repeated Edward, lifting his head. "Three years ago as I was calling there, feeling very tired and worn

out, he offered me wine. I refused, but he pressed it upon me, saying I needed some stimulus. I went from his home that evening thinking that if wine made me feel so *good*, so exhilarated as though all the blues were gone, I would drink and enjoy the effect."

The tone of Edward's voice suddenly changed to one of mocking bitterness. "Give Mr Harland my blessing, my calming benediction. Tell him I am indebted to him, to his kind hospitality for all the misery I bring upon myself and those at home. If I shall die a drunkard and an outcast, it may be pleasant for him to know that my soul's blood is upon his garments. His sleep will probably be as refreshing and dreamless as mine to-night. Good-bye, Dale,—it's time to shut the office and shut me out, and I must go."

The snow was falling heavily, and it was quite dark outside. The streetlamps glimmered faintly, and Edward saw men hurrying up town homeward bound, for the bells were ringing six. He was not ready to go home, nor was he quite prepared to forget himself in intoxication. Drawing his fur cap over his ears, and buttoning up his coat, for the cold, blustering wind chilled him, he walked aimlessly down Bunton Street.

He had not gone far when he was stopped by a faint voice at his side. Then he saw in the darkness a little girl with a thin, tattered shawl closely wrapped over her cold arms. "Please sir can't you give me a penny to git some supper?"

Me father is drunk sir, and us children are starvin'
an' so cold."

Edward emptied all his change into her bare,
cold hand. "God have pity on them all," he
muttered to himself as he turned away.

Hardly knowing what he did, and because of
a vague feeling of discomfort, he entered a warm
bright saloon, one of his customary haunts.

Burying himself in a large chair in one corner, he
gave way to his bitter, hopeless thoughts, oblivious
of the movements or talk of his companions. After
a while he felt his shoulder touched, and turning
half angrily his eye encountered Mr. Stuart's
finely-featured face. "How are you Osborne?
I've not seen you for ages. Good heavens! you
are as pale as death. Come and have something
strengthening for the sake of old times."

Edward rose mechanically, and the two men
went towards the bar; but while the one pru-
dently sipped the contents of his glass, the other
with equal imprudence emptied his.

After Mr. Stuart's departure Edward once
more sought the comfortable arm-chair. For
awhile he sat there, languidly, sensuously enjoying
the warm glow caused by the strong liquor he
had drunk. Then a wild, mad impulse swept
over him, a strong desire for more intense enjoy-
ment, even complete forgetfulness, and he called
for glass after glass. Soon after he again found
himself in the open air. It was now half-past
seven, and he turned in the direction of home.

But at the corner of Grand Street he ran against a tall gentleman who was hurrying in the opposite direction. His foot slipped, and in falling heavily on the pavement his head struck against the curbstone. The gentleman stopped, and with the assistance of a man who was passing carried him into the nearest drug-store, and laid him on a lounge in the inner room. Edward's cap had fallen off, and the brown curls, damp with snow and sleet, fell over the cut on his forehead from which the blood was streaming. The eyes were closed, the face deathly pale. After looking at him searchingly as if the features seemed familiar, the gentleman hastened to assist the druggist in his efforts to restore his consciousness. "Is he seriously injured?" he asked.

"Can't tell; bad job."

"Have you any idea who he is?"

"Yes, young Osborne (poor fellow) of the firm (hold his head a little higher) firm of Kinglake, Dale (look out there. Give me that handkerchief) lawyers you know. He's been going bad lately I've heard tell. A great pity poor fellow."

"Where does he live? . . . I'll get a cab and bring a doctor. Don't spare anything to make him comfortable."

* * * * *

Eleanor was sitting by the parlor grate alone. The book she had been reading—Richter's "*Hesperus*," had fallen unheeded in her lap, and

her eyes were fixed on the glowing coals. This sentence had almost startled her: "But there shall come an era when it shall be light, and man shall awake from his dreams.... Infinite Providence, thou *wilt* cause the day to dawn, although as yet struggles the twelfth hour of the night."

Then as her imaginative mind took up the figure and thought of all it suggested and promised, she restlessly rolled back her chair and began walking up and down the room. But too soon her thoughts came back to the care and the trouble which she seldom forgot. Were brightness and joy never to be found in all her endless life?

The door-bell rang loudly as though pulled by a strong decided hand; and not waiting to turn up the hall gas, Eleanor quickly opened the door. A tall figure, covered with snow, stood outside, and she dimly discerned in the darkness the outline of a cab in the street.

"May I see Mrs. Osborne?" The voice strangely carried Eleanor's thoughts back into the past.

"Mrs. Osborne is ill. Will I do as well? Come in."

He shook the snow from him, and entered the hall. As the light from the bright parlor fire flashed through the door and illuminated their faces, they both gave a start of recognition, and Eleanor offered her hand. Then Mr. Seymour said hurriedly, "Can you bear it? I am

quite sure there is nothing immediately serious. Your brother has fallen and is hurt. Will you prepare his room while we bring him in?"

She showed him she could bear it by her admirable self-control and promptitude in the performance of those services to relieve which only a true gentle-woman can perform efficiently. A more weak and selfish one would have been but a hindrance and trouble. They carried Edward up-stairs and laid him on the bed in his own room. He was conscious now, and suffering very much.

After rendering what assistance he could, Mr. Seymour went down again into the parlor. The fire there had burned down low and the light was quite dim. He wondered what strange Providence had thus guided him once more to this home. Why had the thought, the memory of Eleanor been with him these two long years when she had been suffering? Ah! he knew without definite explanation, what those years had been to her:—he had seen the shadows in her eyes, the sad weary lines of care around the expressive mouth. How he would have loved to help and comfort her, to bring the lost joy back! But where was Russell Stuart? Was not that his service and privilege?

Absence in New Orleans, completely isolated from the sphere in which Eleanor moved, even beyond the reach of any newsmonger, had been Mr. Seymour's misfortune. He felt in the unen-

viable condition of a man who anxiously desires knowledge, but sees no way of obtaining it without direct question, or annoying blunder.

He was leaning on the mantle-piece, looking into the fading embers of the fire, when he heard her step in the room. She said that Edward had fallen into a sleep caused by exhaustion and the doctor's prescribed narcotic.

"I am sure you must feel very tired," Mr. Seymour said, as he rolled an easy chair towards her.

"Just a very little.... But you, I do not believe you had your tea when you so kindly——"

"Oh yes, Mrs. Stuart,—Miss Osborne!" he added quickly, feeling as he caught the startled look in her eyes that he *had* blundered. "Then you are not married yet to Mr. Stuart?"

"No, and I never expect to be, Mr. Seymour," Eleanor answered impulsively. The next moment she laughed while a hot flush came into her cheeks.

"You must forgive my ignorance," he said after a short pause. "When I first met you I heard you were soon to be married, hence my inference. By the way the doctor told me some one would have to watch to-night, and I have been wishing that you would allow me to stay.... You should, Miss Osborne, because I was the cause of the fall."

His words went to her heart with a sense of comfort, of unbounded trust in him. She did not object to his proposal—indeed accepted it.

calmly and naturally, as he wished, and in the same way as she had accepted his assistance once before—with a sincere “Thank you.” Then she asked gravely “Was he intoxicated ? O Mr. Seymour! I have often wondered where all this will end. For months I have been expecting some fearful calamity. If you could only influence him. There are so few gentlemen here who in any way help him to live a better life.”

Eleanor scarcely knew why she felt such confidence in the man standing there by the mantle, looking down at her. This feeling of trust, of reliance in his judgment and wisdom came involuntarily, and yet it borrowed no strength from imagination.

“ My younger brother is so strong in his temperance principles,” she said after a long silence. “ He is away to-night ; drove Flo Harland out to Leatheale. She had a message to deliver there. They were coming right back. I am listening all the time for the sleigh bells. Did you know she is to be married soon ? ” Eleanor’s face brightened and her voice took a more cheerful tone, as it always did when she spoke of her friend.

“ I was not aware of the stupendous fact. I only came here yesterday, consequently have not called yet.”

“ It is your loss;—theirs too,” she added quickly.

He smiled down at her asking, “ Who is the happy man elected to this honor ? ”

"My brother's partner Mr. Dale. Why *your* old friend. He has changed wonderfully since he knew her. A little inclined to dissipation before, he is now so trustworthy in every way, sincere and true-hearted. Flo tells me that he is trying to convince her father that his course in regard to wine drinking has not been wise, that he has made a great mistake in not realizing his responsibility. Mr. Seymour, I am sometimes driven so near despair, as to be tempted to wish that no acts of ours may have effect upon others."

"Such a condition would prevent all hope of doing good, as well as take away all check upon evil, Miss Osborne; and each of us would feel rather cold and icy in our isolation, would we not? I should be lonely indeed, if you had no influence on my spiritual nature. Things you said at our first meeting have remained with me all this time, have helped me in many an anxiety and crushing disappointment."

She smiled at his earnestness, but changed the subject, by asking how long his business would keep him in town this time.

"A very desirable position has been offered me permanently in the firm of Albert & Beattie. The Bar of this city is composed of such able and noble men, that I am anxious to have the advantage of intercourse with them. I have no ties elsewhere, therefore any arrangements I make will be clear gain."

Eleanor was prevented from replying by the arrival of her brother Aleck.

“A heart which seeks feels well that it wants something ; a heart which has lost feels that something has gone.”—*Goethe.*

CHAPTER VIII.

“A heart which seeks feels well that it wants something ; a heart which has lost feels that something has gone.”—*Goethe.*

It was well that Edward Osborne had to lie there on that sick bed, helpless, and much of the time alone. Freed from excitement and the distracting cares of business, he had opportunity for a good deal of self-introspection, and it seemed that he saw clearer into the depths of his own sin and wretchedness, than ever before. Indeed he had never dreamed of the possibility of such sin and wilful wrong-doing being existent in his heart.

What had the twenty-five years of his life been to him ? Altogether a failure. Must it always be so ? Why could he not shake the past from him, and break from it, as a boat tosses spray from her bow, and dashes onward ? Ah ! he did not feel strong enough to battle with the angry, raging waves which threatened to engulf him, and ride on top of them victorious, conqueror.

But for his friends his courage would have utterly failed. They gave him resolution, pur-

pose, ambition to be lifted onto a higher plane of life, where the outlook would be broad, the atmosphere fresh and inspiring. But the path to it indeed lay over rugged, footsore places, and there was a burden for the weary, distrustful heart, heavy to be borne.

Coming in one day, Mr. Seymour found him very despondent. "I have just promised Eleanor," he said, "that when I am well and able to be around again, I will entirely break away from my old habits and companions, and start life again. While listening to her eloquent arguments in favor of a life consecrated to true and noble things, it seemed an easy thing to promise. But now I am tired Seymour, and you don't know how I crave for a glass of something. It seems as if I were going wild, that I would willingly give my right hand for one glass of wine. Wouldn't it satisfy me? Oh! I often wake up in the night and lay here and plan how I can get some. If there were any in the house! But I must not talk of it. Nell says it will never do to try and drink moderately."

"Never, never with your excitable, impulsive temperament."

"Well, what can I do? It is too late. I have gone too far already. I may as well give up all hopes of reformation; have a merry life and a short one, and drop in to the grave as soon as possible," he added recklessly.

"And break your sister's heart. Oh Osborne!"

do you see how pale and thin she is ? And would it be a merry life ? ” Philip asked gravely.

Edward sighed heavily. “ God knows it is miserable ; so miserable ! ”

“ Which is the wisest, dear friend ; — a wretched life as you confess it is, with the prospect of a terrible death which involves, in the life beyond, separation from all that is pure and beautiful and holy ; or a life of hard struggle indeed, but great content and satisfaction, a peaceful death winning the glorious joys of Heaven ? ”

Edward turned away his head and made no response. His friend went on : “ You remember that little poem by Goethe which Eleanor read to us yesterday ? Wait and I will get the book :

The future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow ;
We press still thorow,
Nought that abides in it
Daunting us — onward.

And solemn before us,
Veiled, the dark Portal,
Goal of all mortal : —
Stars silent rest o’er us,
Graves under us silent !

While earnest thou gazest,
Comes boding of terror,
Comes phantasm and error
Perplexes the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the voices,—
Heard are the sages,
The worlds and the ages :
“Choose well; your choice is
Brief and yet endless:

Here eyes do regard you
In Eternity’s stillness ;
Here is all fullness,
Ye brave to reward you ;
Work and despair not.”

“Yes Edward, there is great happiness in store for you, for your mother, your sister, if you will but use all the power of your will in the coming struggle. Prove which is the stronger, your appetite or yourself. Don’t let it conquer you, you with your manly strength of intellect, your noble moral nature. And then you have a work to do for Christ, and he is calling you very lovingly to enter his service. Choose well.”

“Work? There’s no work for such as I; my work is among dry law books and musty parchments: no room for Christianity in them.”

“You do not know. Encourage some hearts by showing them how you can resist temptation. Add your share to the noble work of making this world wiser, happier, more worthy of its divine origin. What glorious possibilities for heroism in life, if only you will trust God to give you the strength you need. Have you asked for it?”

"I have tried to, but it seemed as if I spoke to the air. I have neglected him too long, distrusted his love and care for me. I used to be with Russell Stuart a good deal, and his cool self-possessed skepticism proved very attractive to my intellect. And yet I never have lost the faith of my innocent boyhood. Would to God I were back once more gathering daisies in the fields with Eleanor,—no thought nor care for the great throbbing world of experience, suffering and unbelief."

A long silence between them. At last Edward spoke again. "Philip you believe in prayer: I wish you would pray for me so I can hear."

So Mr. Seymour knelt by the bedside and asked God, who like a father pitith His children, to help this prodigal son who had wandered so far, to arise and go to Him. To Edward it seemed that he had never before listened to a prayer so earnest, so sincere, so confident of a sure and speedy answer. The Redeemer seemed sensibly near, and there entered into his heart the certain assurance that he loved and forgave him, and would guide him onward in the best path which any man can choose,—the narrow path leading up to light.

This was the turning point in Edward Osborne's life,—henceforth he had new wishes and aims. His life certainly was not peaceful and calm, but a battle, a constant warfare with

the fearful temptations daily besetting him. To him that overcometh belongs a victorious crown, and he fought manfully and was brave and true. Difficult? Yes! but the reward of each faithful endeavor—release from the chains of his former slavery, made him rejoice.

* * * * *

Ere the winter closed he was once more at his favorite desk in the office of "Kinglake, Dale and Osborne," and this was the crowning joy.



CHAPTER IX.

"God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame."—*Mrs. Browning.*

"This world is very lovely. Oh my God! I thank thee that I live."—*Anon.*

It was a chilly evening towards the end of May. To homeless Philip, as he came in from the blustering wind outside, the little parlor looked cosy and home-like; and the sight of Eleanor's face, bright and joyous now, made his manly heart throb with a strange, sudden hope. Despite his independent self-reliance, he associated her with his whole future happiness.

Eleanor's thoughts were hard to analyze, but she found that evening the love and interest prayed for long ago.

* * * * *

"Nell, my darling, will you come to my wedding? Before that heartless cousin of mine went to Europe I thought you would be married first, but you perceive I have got the start of you. Now you sit there as contentedly; looking so merry and roguish, just as if you *were* going to be married to-morrow. At any rate I see where the current is running; and I am prophet enough to know that sooner

or later your boat will drift into the safe harbor of matrimony. Mrs. Partington would say who, who would ever have thought it? Well, I hope you will be just as happy as Walter and I are, and expect to be forever. Isn't it nice and comfortable to feel that you can make another happy? It's even better than being happy yourself, although I repudiate with scorn the sentiment of that song Russell used to sing so much. What are the words? Something like these:—"I am content to drink drops of enjoyment if only the fountain fall freely for thee."

"I think I like pailfuls of enjoyment instead of drops," said Eleanor.

"Of course you do, my dear. Oh! it is a base doctrine, and that cousin of mine would be the last man to sing it truthfully. He would want fully as much homage and reverence as he gave. Do you know that he is very cucumbery towards me, because I will not bow humbly at his shrine? He would make a good Pope."

Eleanor laughed: "But we would not be submissive cardinals."

Then the talk drifted back towards the subject of the wedding. "I had real difficulty in getting papa to promise that we need have no wine," Flo said. "He affirmed that it would be absurd and singular. But I teased and coaxed; and finally, cat-like, got my back up and firmly set my foot down, that I would have my own way. So the dear fellow was compelled to yield grace-

fully. I think I was in some measure excusable; because I could not possibly begin my married life by intentionally sinning. It is a real trial to me that Papa is so indifferent. I believe that righteousness and sin are struggling for supremacy in this world, and every *careless, indifferent* act of ours which is on the side of evil, is an obstruction in the way of the right conquering."

"Yes, but the righteousness shall reign from the rivers to the end of the earth."

Nothing was heard for a while but the rustling of the wind in the elm trees outside the window. Then Flo looked up from her work and said: "Aunt Stuart was here yesterday. She informed me that Leathdale is to undergo extensive repairs for the reception of the bride. They are coming back the end of October. Report saith that brought up in Boston, breathing that intellectual air, she is very clever, quite a modern Margaret Fuller, devoted especially to German Literature. She would suit you there Eleanor. We must get her to disseminate some of this superfluous learning oversome of us less highly favored mortals.... Stop laughing Eleanor! You confuse and embarrass me. You've been just bubbling over with happiness lately. Your pails are too full of joy altogether. I ought to dip in a tea-cup and take some out."

"I am very happy it is true," replied Eleanor earnestly. "I even dislike to sleep for then I am

unconscious of it all. Such joy is almost too good to last." The sweet voice trembled.

"Well, I don't wonder, when your home is so lovely. Your mother is a changed woman, and dear Edward is such a comfort to her. And your prospective husband is grand and noble. Why Nell, I think you did well by giving up that heartless cousin of mine, and waiting two long years for Mr. Seymour."

"I do too," said Eleanor laughing. "I am glad you like him."

"Now Eleanor don't think me sentimental when I tell you that whenever I see Mr. Seymour I am reminded of that verse written of his namesake Sir Philip Sydney:

"A sweet attractive kind of grace ;
A full assurance given by looks ;
Continual comfort in a face—"

But there he is Nell, come to take you home."

* * * * *



CHAPTER X.

"Wir sind nie entfernter von unsren Wünschen als wenn wir uns einbilden das Gewünschte zu besitzen.—"Goethe.

"We are never further from our wishes than when we imagine that we possess what we have desired."

It was a terribly stormy night ; heavy peals of thunder shook the windows, and every now and then the lightning flashed brilliantly in the room.

The master of Leathdale was sitting by his library table busily writing. A tall, elegantly dressed lady sat in the shadow beyond the circle of light cast by the lamp, restlessly toying with a book, her bright eyes alternately travelling from it to the face of the absorbed writer.

The clock struck eleven ; he tossed aside his pen and looked up. "Alice it is getting late. Had you not better think of retiring?"

"Who could sleep such a night as this?" was the petulant answer. "Just hear that roar of thunder ! I declare Russell this old house will fall."

He smiled provokingly at the speaker and turned back to his writing.

But in less than five minutes he threw down his pen again and rose hastily, exclaiming : "I declare

I forgot to go and see that old servant. He may be dead by this time, and John particularly requested my attention before I retired. Be sure and remain here till I return Alice. Accompanying me would unnecessarily agitate your nerves. You may criticize my work ; that article is almost finished. It is against Ruskin's theory." Fervently kissing her he abruptly left the room.

Up the stairway, through the long dark halls, the young man took his way. He never forgot the gloom, the sublime horror of this stormy, lightning-lit night. The secluded room which he reached at last was quiet and still, save for the low muttering of the decreasing thunder. Mrs. Stuart was sitting by the side of a prostrate form on the bed ; her trembling fingers passing through the tangled locks of heavy grey hair ; her eyes fixed intently on the worn features, now rapidly assuming the cold, unimpressible rigidity of death.

Her son threw his arm around her saying gently : "Mother, I should have been with you but for the fear of exciting Alice's suspicions. She must not know of this. What a relief it will be to you."

The mother looked up, a glance of real joy for a moment taking the place of the former hopeless expression. "Oh, Russell!" she exclaimed in a half whisper, "he recognized me just a few minutes ago. A sudden change came over him,

his eyes lost their wild look and grew soft and natural.... He put out his hand and spoke to me in a tone, unheard so long. Then he closed his eyes and said: 'Margaret, good-bye.' Oh! Russell, the comfort of this is indescribable. Who knows but in that last rational moment he was sorry and God forgave him."

"Do not vex yourself with fears. If he live at all it is probable he is happy at last." After another long intense look at the face, noble and beautiful now in its silent repose, Mrs. Stuart continued: "Oh Russell if he would only speak once more! After all these weary years of waiting, it is hard, hard!" With an uncontrollable sob, the unhappy, proud-hearted woman hid her face on her son's shoulder. He lovingly, reverently lifted it up, and kissed the trembling lips.... The one unselfish impulse of his heart was his strong affection for his suffering mother,—the wronged wife of the man lying there so cold and still.

The faithful John had furtively drawn his coat-sleeve over his eyes, and walked away to the window. Presently Mrs. Stuart raised her head. "I am ready to go now, Russell. I feel tired out, perhaps I can sleep." With her usual firm step and erect carriage she left the room. Russell lingered but a moment. "You have made plans for the funeral to-morrow night at twelve John? Be very careful that it does not get wind. Even my wife knows nothing except that an old servant has died, and because of a dis-

agreeable disease, will be buried secretly. Lock the doors securely, and leave the keys on my dressing table."

"Very well sir."

Not more than twelve minutes had elapsed since Mr. Stuart's exit from the library. Its luxurious warmth and brightness contrasted pleasantly with the dreary desolation of the strange scene he had just left, and with a sigh of relief he rolled his easy chair towards the fire, and drew his not unwilling wife to a place on his knee. "Is he dead?" she asked, pushing back the hair from his forehead, and attempting to smooth out the furrows there.

"Yes, he had been sick a long time before you came to grace Leathdale. I wish the fact of his death to be mentioned to no one. The servants are so foolishly superstitious, and would likely draw most unflattering conclusions relative to our prosperity, because of one dying under our roof on such an unpropitious night."

She laughed low and musically. "You are pale with apprehension and devout fears. The secret will die with me."

"Alice, there are some cigars in that drawer, under those rolls of papers. May I trouble you?"

She went to do his bidding, but did not find them readily. "Are they not there?" he asked, lifting his eyes from the fire, where they had rested in momentary abstraction.

"Yes at last; and here is a photograph of your

cousin, Mrs. Dale. "Why quite a number of others also. I am going to look them over while you smoke." She brought him matches and cigars, and then sat down on a low chair at his feet,—the position of all others he loved best to have her assume. "This one of your mother when she was quite young is fine. How wonderfully handsome! She looks happier here than now, at least more spontaneously so. You know I have not seen her all day? She has kept her room so closely because of a racking headache. They must wear upon her."

Alice was so intent upon the photographs that her husband's grave preoccupation was unnoticed. "I declare Russell here is one of you,—no—yes it must be so."

Her husband deigned no reply. "Did you hear me sir? How sober you are! I believe you are still troubled about that disagreeable death. There is nothing fearful in it; only a passing of the finite back to the one eternal and infinite substance. There is no consciousness beyond, no real immortality."

"I know that, and yet the change is solemn." She laughed at his shadowy face. "By the way I looked at your manuscript. It is quite illogical in one place. Your reasoning is obscure. It is my firm belief that your mind, though well suited for attainments in mathematics or natural science, is too unethereal in its texture, for the comprehension of the more subtle mysteries of

metaphysics. I wouldn't dip into them if I were you. You asked me to criticize, you know. I really do not think you successfully hold ground against Ruskin. I am quite in harmony with the theory you so loftily reject."

The patronizing tone of this criticism was exceedingly distasteful to her proud husband. He threw his cigar into the grate muttering some unintelligible words. Why could not the lady at his feet consistently have her words harmonize with her lowly position?

"I shall finish your production in the morning, meanwhile will your lordship inform me if this be a picture of yourself?"

"It is my father."

"How you do resemble him! Why have you never showed me this before? He must have been about your age. How long is it since he died?"

Russell gave an almost perceptible start. His wife, busy in her examination, did not perceive the dark flush on his brow.

He leaned over and took up one of the photographs. "Do you like that face?" he questioned hurriedly.

It was that of a young girl. The features were far from regular. The nose a little too long; the mouth imperfectly curved, and too firm for beauty,—but the eyes, oh the eyes! such an expression of bright intellect, of strong faith and love in them.

The lady scrutinized it long before she spoke. "There is great power in that face ; a strength and tenacity of purpose which would lead her over burning lava if she were convinced that the right path lay through it."

"I once bitterly experienced the shock of her obstinacy," said Russell after a moment, a sneer disfiguring his fine mouth. "She was an infatuated fanatic."

Longing to vent his vexation on something tangible, he tore the picture from his wife's grasp, and tossed it into the dying embers of the fire. In wondering astonishment she watched the paper twist and curl by the action of the heat, till it was a trembling mass of blackness, then turned around for an explanation. The swollen blue veins in his forehead denoted intense anger, the usually apathetic eye shot sparks of fire.

Her low amused laugh served to check the manifestation of his unmanly resentment, and his brow cleared. "Poor picture, the innocent cause of interrupting a profound physiognomical dissertation. Is it the pleasure of your ladyship to come to bed?"

His manner showed he was in no mood for answering any curious questions she might ask ; and as she was strangely exceptional in being untroubled by curiosity this gave her no uneasiness.

With elegant grace and not less admirable tact she resumed her former place, and laid her head

caressingly on his broad shoulder. The depths of the man's strong feelings were stirred. Unpleasant memories of repulsed affection, of wounded pride, the now extinct photograph had invoked. In contrast, how gratifying the love of this beautiful, intellectual woman, this queen of elegance, culture and fashion, as much superior to Eleanor Osborne, as the mountain in its lofty grandeur to the little projection nestling at its base.

He forgot the irritation caused by her audacity in expressing dissent from his opinions. Perhaps he was in the wrong. Who knew? As strange phenomena had been observed once or twice in the history of the world.

Three months ago had Russell Stuart been told that he would thus be acknowledging his wife's superior insight, and in a manner regulating his opinions by hers, he would have scorned the prophecy with disgust. Even now the tribute was rendered unconsciously; he did not see that it was she who ruled. After a long pause she raised herself up and said demurely, "Now Russell I am ready to sleep. Listen! the voice of the thunder is receding; the flashes of lightning growing faint and few. In fact the storm is dying..... You will not think of undertaking that mysterious journey to-morrow?"

He laughed. "There is no mystery in it Alice. A business friend has arranged to meet me at N, a little village on the sea-shore. I shall

only stay there a couple of hours. By starting back on the first train I shall be here in time for dinner."

"And then we shall give our party the following night you know. By the way I want you to thoroughly understand that I do not sanction the use of wine at such assemblies. Wait! listen till I finish. What is the use of these elaborate suppers anyway? They promote indigestion, intellectual stupidity, and take time which should be devoted to literary conversation. Now I am going to work a reform here in this city. ... But it is not wholly because of this that I object to wine. I will not consciously put this temptation in the way of the young men who visit me."

"You *must* have a supper worthy of our guests and in harmony with our position, and you *must* have wine, Alice."

"But I shall not have wine."

"Will you dare to go against my will Alice?"

"Yes my dearest. I dare do anything I think is right. What do you mean by so often saying I am queen of Leathdale, that I must rule everything according to my desire? And now you are usurping authority, and trying your best to rule me. I don't go down to your office and give orders, and say you must use green sealing wax on all your letters, and throw away all your one-cent stamps! Oh Russell! you must yield to me in this. If you do not allow me to give my party as I wish, you will not see me present to grace it."

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She caught hold of his hand and drew his cloudy, almost angry face down to a level with her own. "What do you say Russell?"

He looked at her a moment in silence. Then he smiled and kissed her. "Well dear as you are determined, I suppose I shall have to yield for fear of punishment. I suppose you are right. My mother will agree with you thoroughly. * * Come dear, open the door while I turn out the gas."



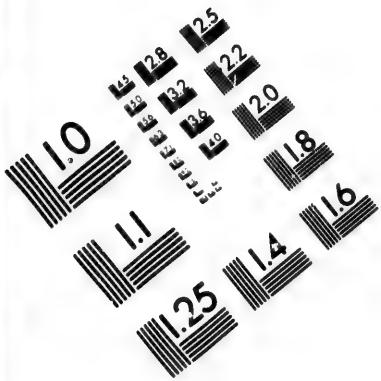
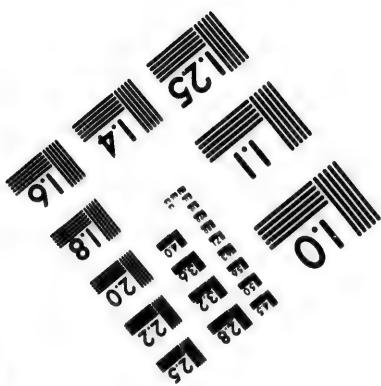
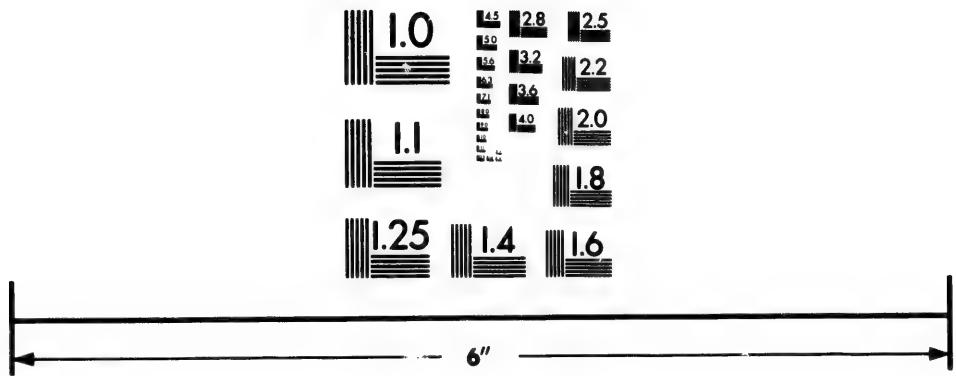
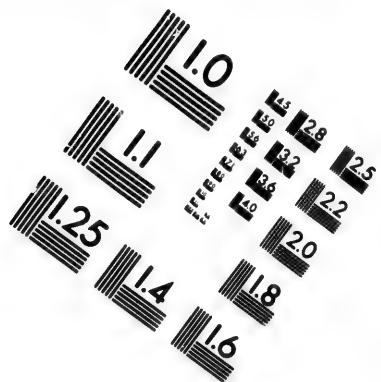


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CHAPTER XI

"In all battles if you await the issue, each fighter has prospered according to his right. He has fought with all his might, and has prevailed. His very death is no victory over him. He dies indeed, but his work lives, very truly lives."—*Carlyle*.

"Will you draw the curtain back a little further Eleanor, so I can see the sun come up from behind those hills in the distance? How beautiful and blue they look in the morning mist. * * * When every thing else is so silent and hushed, how strange the roll of the surf sounds. It is so monotonous and deep."

"Yes, it is indeed the bass in the harmonious anthem which nature is singing to God. And Edward, it is so restless, a symbol of the working of our immortal and infinite minds. Do you see those white crests on the top of the waves as they roll up on the beach and break? Let me raise your head a little higher."

"That is better..... I can see the blue waters stretch away as far as the eye can reach, and then they blend into the blue of the sky. Oh Eleanor what glorious clouds! so clearly does the water catch the reflection that there is a double sunrise. The sun must be

almost at the top of that hill which looms up to the sky like a tall sentinel on guard; for see the fog is lifting..... I wish Philip were here. When did you say he would come?"

"The train is due at seven."

"Then he will be here soon. Will it be very long?" and Edward sank back on the pillow.

"Just an hour and a quarter. You are tired waiting. I wish you could have slept more in the night. Don't you feel any better, Teddie?"

She came and sat down, her face full of loving anxiety. He drew her to him, saying gently : "Eleanor the end has almost come. I feel and know that when that sun rises to-morrow morning I shall be with God. Oh think of it! If this world is so fair and beautiful, its music so sweet, what must Heaven be?"

He felt her trembling, but could not see the tearless grief in her face : "Don't grieve darling. Why should you care when I have been only a trouble to you for so long. Oh what would have become of me without you. God pity the poor fellows who have no sisters to love and trust them, when every one else is cold and skeptical."

"Edward, Edward, how can I let you go," came from the very depths of his sister's heart.

"Eleanor give me your hand,—there! How cold you are! Now I must talk to you for a minute while I can. It has been so hard to live,—a constant struggle with myself and with evil; so hard to resist the persuasions of my former

friends? I have never told you how subtly Russell Stuart especially, has exerted his almost irresistible influence in endeavoring to make me fall. He could not have realized my weakness. Oh really, really Eleanor, I am so thankful that God sees fit to let me rest. Perhaps he knows my strength is not worth much, and he is saving me from going back to the old life." A violent fit of coughing interrupted the speaker; then he continued steadily, though every word gave him pain. "Our separation will be but for a little while, and then just as that sun for whose rising we have waited has chased away the shadows of last night's storm—"

"But Edward it is still so dark, I cannot see ahead," said Eleanor despairingly.

"Is this my little sister, who used to keep my courage up when hope was almost gone? Our Father will help you darling, never forget that."

She could not speak, and he went on in a low tone: "I would have liked to have had a longer time to show the sincerity of my repentance by endeavouring to rescue others from the depths in which they have allowed themselves to sink. Life is to be always honored and valued, if not, the gift would have been withheld. But then when the work is done, the soul feels a longing for that other life beyond, which is far better. I am sometimes overwhelmed when I lie here and think of what is before me. Think Eleanor of

the gain : no more sin, no more unsatisfied longings, unfulfilled aspirations. But my darling, my most precious treasure I must leave behind, (remember, only for a little while) you must help me at the last, for I know the pain will be hard to bear. The only regret I have is that I must die away from home. These fresh sea breezes have done me no good after all our sanguine hopes. You see my constitution was broken by dissipation. The check came too late. It is always thus, one has to pay the penalty of broken law. How well I remember that night a year ago last December. How miserable I was, utterly disgusted with my life, and yet feeling powerless to change it. Philip was a good friend to me... Are you sure he is coming? I *must* bid him good-bye."

"It won't be long now," Eleanor said, releasing her hand from Edward's and leaning over to look at his watch. Just then a ray from the rising sun fell across the pillow and illuminated his face. A beautiful expression rested upon it, yet she saw how weary he was with the effort of talking. She stooped and kissed him, trying to steady her voice: "You must sleep now till Philip comes, so you may feel like seeing him. Try now. I will go down and tell mother to show him up here when he arrives."

When she came back, tired nature had asserted its rights and he lay sleeping, his head resting on his hand. His face was very pale, save for the

hot flush on his cheek, and Eleanor saw plainly what she had before tried hard not to see, that death had indeed set his seal upon it, and would soon claim his prize.

Could she yield this beloved brother to God who gave him, and without a rebellious murmur see him go away into that spirit-land, where she could not follow, nor her voice recall him?

Truly she needed strength to brave this swift approaching trial in resignation. Prayer is the only refuge when those we "lean on most and love the first," are being removed from the mists and vapors of earth into the bright sunlight of the presence of God. But she could not pray,—only strive to control the aching of her heart while waiting for the consummation of the mystery.

Nothing broke the stillness in the room, but the loud ticking of the watch on the table, and the subdued, never ceasing roar of the billows on the distant sea shore.

At last Edward stirred. She was immediately at his side. "Isn't it time Eleanor?" The weary longing in his voice touched her.

"Yes darling, it is ten minutes past seven. I haven't told you before for fear you would anticipate too much; but I expect both Walter and Flo. I heard from them last night. Don't be disappointed if they don't come." At the same moment the door was opened gently. A glad surprised exclamation came from Edward, at

sight of Florence's soul-cheering face and Mr. Dale's familiar figure. Mr. Seymour brought up the rear with Mrs. Osborne. There seemed nothing wanting now to complete Edward's happiness.

The long painful day wore away and still he lingered. He had not strength to talk much. He told his friends what they were to him, how much he loved them, more by smiles and loving looks than words. How precious Eleanor was to him was best shown by his desire for her continual presence—restless and disturbed if it was withdrawn even for a moment. But how hard the day was to her no one knew. Whenever Edward slept and the necessity for control was not for a time imperative, Philip could see by the firmly compressed lips and the tightly drawn lines between the eyebrows that the noble heart was intensely suffering. But she showed nothing but brightness and tenderness towards the dying brother.

Though her strength was beginning to yield she refused to be separated from him, and insisted on sitting alone with him the first part of the night. At one o'clock Mr. Seymour came to relieve her, but he paused on the threshold of the room.

Eleanor was sitting on the bed, her hand clasped in Edward's. The light from a shaded lamp showed that a great change had come over his face, and while her's was calm in its

gravity it was exceedingly pale. Philip wondered when her strange self-control and fortitude would cease. He softly stole away to bring the others for he knew the end had come.

Edward spoke no more, though it was an hour after that before he died. They needed no assurance by words that it was well with him. His recent life had been almost exceptional in its beauty,—an unmistakable record of the depth of his repentance and the strength of his will.

“After life's fitful fever he slept well.”



CHAPTER XII

"Men's deeds are fair enigmas, let man solve them;
But men's dark motives are in the books of God."

Lord Lytton.

During the rest of the night, there was enough for Eleanor to do to effectually prevent her from seeking the quiet and solitude her spirit craved. Not even Flo's gentleness could soothe Minnie. Nervous and excited by the strange solemnity of the death scene, she demanded the most wise, judicious care. Mrs. Osborne indulged in the most violent hysterics, selfishly exaggerating her own sorrow with no apparent conception of the pain she gave those who had more power of self-control.

At last in the early dawn of the morning she yielded to Mr. Seymour's persuasions and went to bed. Minnie had already sunk into a restless, feverish sleep, her hand tightly grasping Eleanor's.

Eleanor was leaning forward, her other hand covering her eyes, when the watchful Flo came up to her and whispered: 'Can't we transfer hands Nell? She will never know the difference and then you can go away for a little while.' Eleanor did not permit her eyes to meet those

of her friend,—her own Florence, whose presence and sympathy were doubly precious in this her great trouble. She silently signified assent and the change was accomplished without disturbing the sleeper. The next moment she was gone.

On her way up stairs she was met by Mr. Seymour, carrying heavy shawls and wraps: "I was thinking you would like to come down to the beach and see the sun rise," he said in response to her enquiring look. "Your mother is sound asleep. Will you come?"

"Yes indeed. I will get my hood."

"Stay: I have it here," he replied arresting her hasty steps.

She smiled at him,—a smile full of meaning, though she said nothing while he deftly fastened her cloak around her neck and put on her warm hood. "This almost hides my darling's face," he said, "but though hidden I can see it all the same..... We will need these shawls to sit on because the rocks are damp. Yesterday I discovered a charming little nook behind an immense rock, nicely sheltered from the wind and out of sight of every one who might be strolling on the beach. Will you be warm enough now, Eleanor? Wait just one moment while I get my coat."

He opened the hall door while speaking and she stepped out. The sunless air was damp and chilly, and with a nervous shiver she drew the folds of the cloak tighter around her throat.

How still everything was in the early hush of the morning ! A thrill of pain shot through her heart as she recalled the morning before, when Edward had so truly prophesied what had come to pass. The crisis she had anticipated with so much dread, the long looked for change had come, and it was all so strange, so sad and lonely. Now no answering smile would flash back to her from the eyes closed alike to earth's beauty and love ; the hand would never more grasp hers with the firmness born of their strong affection and reverence for each other ; the brother and sister had parted company, and until the blissful meeting in Heaven there would be silence between them.

The dew yet lay on the grass and on the planks of the garden walk. The not far distant waves rolled untiringly up upon the white sand of the beach with their usual dull monotonous roar. Narrow shafts of light shot up from behind the far off hills,—sure promise of a sunrise, glorious in beauty and entrancing loveliness.

It took them but a short time to reach the spot Mr. Seymour had chosen.

A high precipitous mass of rock behind and on one side, between them and the village ; on the other side a sharp declivity reaching clear down to the waters' edge. Before, a commanding view of a vast expanse of sand and rocky débris ; then beyond, the faint beginnings of vegetation, the ground getting gradually higher

and higher, ending in the grand insurmountable hills, rising one behind another in solemn majesty and beauty, wooded to their summits.

Spreading the shawls upon the ground and seating himself his back against the wall of rock, Mr. Seymour drew his wife down to a place by his side . . . Oh it was sweet his tender care and watchful love—the sense of protection his presence gave, the feeling of rest in his strong arms ! There was something soothing even in the beat of the waves against the rocks far down below them ; something invigorating in the cold sea air which blew her brown hair into disorder and touched with rosy freshness her pale thin cheeks.

For a long time neither spoke. Silence was most expressive in such a place,—alone with nature and their own thoughts.

“ What are you thinking of Nell ? ” Mr. Seymour asked at last, more for the purpose of saying something to change the expression of her face, than to break the spell of silence. Her color deepened, and the dark eyes flushed with tears. “ I have read somewhere Philip, that the passing away of a single life is but a ripple on the vast ocean of humanity, and I was thinking that though true in regard to the great universe of souls, to some hearts it comes as waves and billows of trouble. And I thought too of him, where he is now, if he can see our sorrow, and yet not be glad that I am here with you . . . Oh it is so comforting that I have you to love !

I can't Philip exactly express my thoughts as they come, you must imagine them."

He bent his head and kissed her fervently. "God grant me worthy of this trust," he said with a tremble in his voice. "I know that before I met you I was all alone in the world, and my love is now concentrated on you as its only centre. I can never be to you what you have been and are to me dear Eleanor, but I am glad that in this terrible loss of yours, I can be a comfort to you."

After that a long pause occurred. The ceaseless washing of the waves against the rocks beneath the sole accompaniment to their earnest thoughts.

Eleanor was very tired. Intense feeling and an equally strong government of that feeling, had made great demands on her physical strength. She felt she could not talk.

The morning train whizzed past and did not rouse her from her reverie ; the loud joyous shouts of the children down on the beach fell unheeded on her ears.

But she did not miss the beauty of the clouds and the lights and shadows on the mountains, caused by the rising sun ; and yet it had touched with glittering gold the tops of even the lowest trees,—and there were broad streaks of wavy sunlight all over the ocean, ere she spoke. What disturbed her was the creaking of a heavy footstep on the other side of the rock, and the

sound of a well-known voice clear and distinct in the morning air.

Startled and surprised she raised up and looked at her husband. "Will they see us here?" she asked excitedly.

"No, sit still. The wind brings their voices toward us, and they are not really so near as you imagine. But if we left this place they would see us."

"I suppose then we will have to be eaves-droppers against our will," she answered, sitting down once more. The next instant she heard these words uttered in a clear distinct tone: "Now at last we are away from all prying eyes and ears. What a nest for curiosity and gossip this little seaport town is! Well Lucy, I don't see why you sent for me. Many men would call me a fool for coming, but you see I have not as hard a heart as you think. Didn't I give you enough to satisfy you? You may thank that confounded Seymour for your good fortune. And yet in less than three years you petition for more."

"Sir I tell you again," answered a sad, sweet voice almost too faint for the listeners to hear; "that it was my brother wrote to you. He's took my money time and again and a few days back he said that if I didn't ask for more he'd kill me. I said no, and he was that drunk you know: well these ugly marks on my arms is his work. Indeed I was shocked to see you come by the train."

"Then you weren't as glad to see me as you used to be to see the lovesick, foolish youth, who thought an hour spent with you a pleasant change from dreary college work and musty books?"

"Oh Mr. Stuart, don't speak of those days; I can't bear to hear you."

"Well don't cry,—you were a mighty pretty girl then, and I loved you heartily. I was awfully sorry I couldn't marry you! But you know that with your educational and social disadvantages, you would not be a fit wife for me."

"Yes, I know it."

"I was glad you had the good sense to so bravely hide your tears. They do annoy me so. Your sweetness made me doubly regret the necessity for giving you up; and yet such regrets and partings are inevitable in this world."

"And your wife now; is she very sweet and pretty?"

"She is handsome Lucy; tall and distinguished, graceful and charming."

"Rich?"

"Yes. She was heiress to two hundred thousand dollars when I married her."

"Rich—handsome—and you love her?"

"Indeed I love her. How otherwise?"

The girl caught the softened accent of his voice, and added in a breathless, constrained tone: "I hope you make her happy. Let me see, you

told me the lady you were going to marry had dark brown hair and eyes—beautiful eyes you said ; yet she wasn't tall nor rich."

"Confound your memory ! That's not the one. She refused me point blank when I got home. I'm glad now she disappointed me for I found her obstinate and self-willed."

"I couldn't believe that. I liked her face ; somehow felt that she would do me good if I could tell her what my life's been ; she'd give me sympathy and tell me how to live and do what's right. There's been a lady here the last two weeks that reminded me of the picture. I saw her one day walking on the beach, a tall, very sick-looking gentleman leaning on her arm. She looked so sweet and sad. I watched for them after that, and saw them every day until a week ago. The last time she was alone, way down on the other side of the old wreck. She'd no idea any one saw her, I was behind a rock and she was crying very hard." (Mr. Seymour glanced anxiously at Eleanor ; her hand was covering her eyes, but he noticed it was shaking with nervous excitement) "Have you got her picture here ?"

The gentleman's voice was raised in angry response: "No I have not, and I wouldn't show it to you if I had. If you mention the lady again I'll_____, well our business is finished. I want it clearly understood that I shall not again answer in person any appeals made by you or

any of your friends. I will arrange that you shall have a certain sum, payable every six months, drawn by you alone. That will prevent foul play."

"But Mr. Stuart I don't want your money!"

"Independence does not agree with your gentle clinging nature my pretty Lucy. It shall be as I will. I feel sure you will never cause me trouble because I trust your love for me. And I hope our lives will not again intermingle. I wish to forget the past, its unpleasant facts I mean. I have many plans for the future. I may be a senator yet Lucy. My political influence is increasing. A great care and anxiety night before last was removed from my mother's mind, and in her happiness I cannot but join. We expect to have a brilliant time next winter. I shall feel more at ease consequently if I know you are not suffering."

"Suffering! Oh Rus——"

"Hush Lucy, not that familiar name, remember. We are total strangers from this hour. Good-bye.....Pshaw! this match won't burn; you have strong breezes here. I wonder if I can get a boat at the Ocean House? The sea is very tempting. I believe I will stop over one train and go out, even if I did promise my wife to be home to dinner.....What a splendid place this is for private conference! Good enough even for the divulgence of State secrets. When I conspire against the Govern-

ment, I shall bring my confederates here to arrange our mode of action. Ha-ha ! Well good-bye Lucy. Keep up good spirits."

The odor of a fine cigar was borne towards the unwilling hearers of this strange dialogue ; and again the heavy footstep crunched the gravel. Not pausing, it went swiftly down the hill towards the sea-shore,—finally was lost in the distance. A few minutes after a lighter step took the opposite direction towards the village ; and Eleanor and Mr. Seymour were once more alone.

Mr. Stuart's incautious words had broken most unpleasantly on the general tendency of Eleanor's previous thoughts. All the associations clustering around the many happy hours of their former friendship, came thronging to her memory, curiously blending with feelings of surprise, abhorrence and regret,—the reality of fact thus conflicting with and modifying the hues of past fancy. Brightening these thoughts, was intense thankfulness that her insight into his character, motives and impulses, had been clear and accurate ; that her judgment had not been blinded by his fascinating magnetism of manner, the glitter and show of his false deceptive life.

Not then could she speak of her feelings to Philip ; though in obedience to an uncontrollable impulse, her fingers tightened their grasp of his,—mute language which he understood and silently appreciated.

* * * * * A few hours after, an idle stroller on the beach noticed far out upon the ocean an oarless boat driven hither and thither by the contrary action of wind and tide. Even while he looked, a huge wave dashed over the frail boat, and when it rose from the submersion, it was bottom upwards and the outline of a man's figure could be discerned clinging desperately to the keel. To the curious crowd, fast gathering, the alarm was given too late to render the contemplated assistance effective. The next moment the boat struck a high projecting rock, and man and boat parted company forever.

When at last the fitful wind had grown steady, blowing landward, and the sun was low behind the mountains, the cold, lifeless body of Russell Stuart drifted high up upon the sandy beach,—almost the same spot from which in the morning he had started in the pride of manly strength and selfish power.

The plans for the future which his egotism had gilded with brilliancy, and to which hope, love and ambition lent charm, had ended in retribution for the past,—swift, unexpected, terrible.

CHAPTER XIII

" Tho' much is taken much abides ; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are we are:
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Tennyson's Ulysses.

Our story is done. It has given but faint glimpses into actions and motives, and events, has traced in mere bare outline fragments of the lives of a few people, in no way remarkable for either talent, beauty or goodness. And yet if considered well there is meaning in such unremarkable conditions as even these,—they are closely linked with the great actions which are *seen* to influence the world.

There have lived at different epochs of the world's history, heroes whose deeds of bravery and skill have excited admiration and won fame. Monuments are reared to their memory—mausoleums which sometimes become shrines for hero worship,—idolotry of great men. But the world's moral victors and spiritual heroes have not shone conspicuously in its chronicles.

Their progress and success have often passed unrecorded, save in the hearts of the few who knew and loved them.

It was thus with the friends to whom we have now to say farewell. The life they contrived to live could not be spoken of as either illustrious or widely known ; yet it was great and true and beautiful. Indeed often shadowed by disappointment, and failure ; yet brightened by not imperfect love and joy. Blest with quick sympathy and regard for the welfare of others, they were strength to the weak, perpetual inspiration to those who had not climbed as high the heights of life or seen as far as they. * * *

Human happiness is incomplete and brief ; possessions change hands, or vanish utterly away, but character endures as the chief corner-stone of the structure which the soul of man is building,—built indeed in time, but if founded on the “Rock of Ages,” shall remain unshaken by the swift, overwhelming billows of eternity’s vast ocean.

THE END.